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Digging behind the veneer, there are only 1,395 permanently affordable housing units that Mayor Newsom can truly take credit for.

EDITOR'S NOTES

By Tim Redmond
tredmond@sfbg.com

When the talk comes around to budget politics these days — and these days, nobody in politics can talk about much else — there's a pretty consistent line out there, from the mainstream left to the far right, and it goes like this:

Public employees have been riding high on great pay and benefits, and they're going to have to accept that those days are over. We can do it nicely, and negotiate and all, but the people who work for the city and the state are getting a haircut. Pension reform. Health care premium hikes. Two-tiered wage systems. Sorry, folks — there's no other choice.

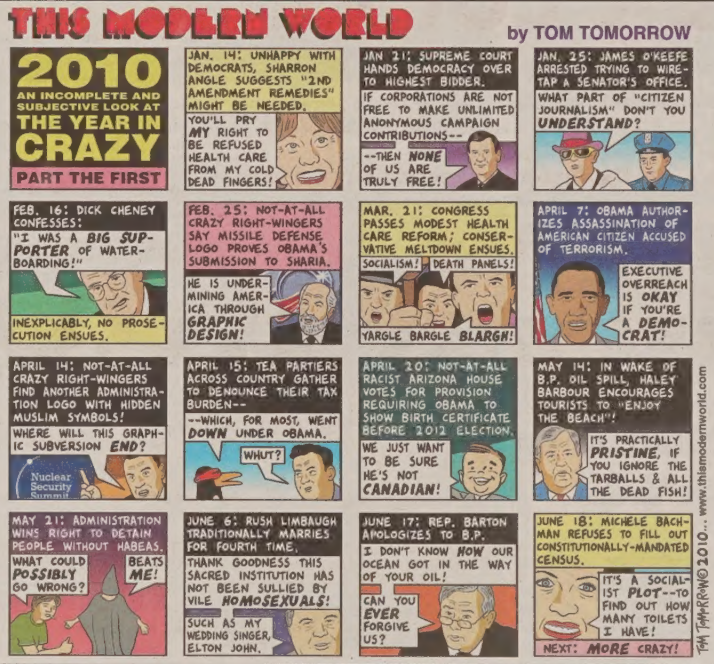
And I understand the feeling. There are plenty of unemployed people out there who aren't happy that they're still paying taxes to support generous pay and health benefits for workers who are consistently maligned as lazy. There are small business owners who can barely afford minimally adequate health insurance for themselves and their employees. There are underpaid private-sector workers who get jealous when they hear what you make over at City Hall.

I get it, and in terms of political reality, public-sector pensions, pay, and benefits are going to have to be part of any budget resolution in Sacramento or San Francisco.

But let me say something else.

In the past 30 years, while public-sector unions were getting organized, becoming a political force and negotiating decent pay and benefits, the United States economy was shifting radically, in a way that we hadn't seen since the turn of the Century. From Reagan on through Bush I, Clinton and Bush II, powerful forces in Washington launched a class war in this country, one that has as many victims as most of the traditional wars we've fought in the past century. The winners have been a small number of people and businesses that have grown impossibly rich — by taking money away from everyone else.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6 »



How many suspects did SF cops frame?

EDITORIAL The job of a district attorney is bringing criminals to justice; everybody knows that. But it's also the job of the city's top law enforcement agent to make sure the innocent are protected — and that's a part that many DAs ignore.

There's considerable evidence that the San Francisco police have framed suspects, set up evidence, and illegally manipulated the legal system to put the wrong people behind bars. Repeatedly. That's a crisis that requires active intervention from the District Attorney's Office — and since Kamala Harris is on her way out the door, it has to be a top priority for her successor.

The latest example: Superior Court Judge Marla Miller ruled Dec. 14 that Caramad Conley was denied his constitutional rights and convicted of murder after San Francisco cops allowed a paid witness to lie on the stand.

Miller concluded that homicide inspector Earl Sanders, who later became police chief and is now retired on a nice pension, knew that witness Clifford Polk was lying and made no effort to correct it.

That's not the first time Sanders has been tied to an improper conviction. John Tennyson and Antoine Goff were sentenced to 25 years to life in 1990 — and spent 13 years in prison for a crime they didn't commit. They were convicted after Sanders, and his then-partner Napoleon Hendrix, failed to inform the defense about key evidence.

Tennison and Goff would still be behind bars — except that Tennison's brother read a Guardian story about the case and put a copy on the windshield of every car in the parking lot where he worked. And some of the people who parked there were lawyers for the top-flight criminal defense firm of Keker & Van Nest LLP.

The lawyers helped Jeff Adachi, then a deputy public defender, convince a federal judge that Tennison and Goff were wrongly convicted, and the two left prison in 2003. The case has now cost the San Francisco taxpayers $7.5 million.

The evidence that may soon free Conley came to light during the Tennison/Goff case — and it looks an awful lot like there's a pattern here. Sanders and Hendrix (who died of cancer in 2009) worked some 500 homicide cases — and it's unlikely that these two are isolated instances.

Conley has a shot at leaving prison after 18 years only because lawyers working on another case stumbled on old files, some of them literally buried under debris in a police warehouse. We have to wonder: how many other innocent people are rotting away (at considerable cost to the state) because SF

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6 »

Homelessness: Newsom's real legacy

By Jennifer Freedenbach

OPINION His voice tinged with modest pride, Gavin Newsom recently announced that he has housed 12,000 people since becoming mayor. This is an absurdly high number, four times larger then any street count of homeless people since he has been in office, but it's been accepted by the media and public.

Homelessness has been a key issue for Newsom. He first got elected in large part by taking it on, and has been celebrated in some quarters as a champion for homeless people.

But digging behind the veneer, removing bus tickets out of town, permanent housing his predecessor, Willie Brown, created, and temporary stays and duplication, there are 1,395 permanently affordable housing units that Newsom can truly take credit for. More frequently his administration has housed people (fewer then 2,000) by leasing residential hotel rooms from slumlords and charging homeless people unaffordable rents to live there.

Only 14 percent of the units have been for families, although they make up 40 percent of the homeless population.

Newsom put three different initiatives on the ballot that have spurred hatred against homeless people. His signature operation was mixing kindness with punishment. This way, he wooed conservatives who saw through the camouflage, and liberals who did not.

Care Not Cash was the first measure. That campaign focused on accusing homeless welfare recipients of spending all their money on booze and drugs. The proponents claimed they would take public assistance away, in return for housing and treatment. The treatment part never came to fruition, and of course proponents never mentioned they were counting shelter as housing.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

CONT»

And they aren't getting any cuts. In fact, their pay, pensions, benefits, and wealth aren't even on the table. Which is profoundly unfair.

Of the 400 richest people in America (according to Forbes), 80 live in California. Their combined new worth is $231.8 billion — about 10 times the size of the state's budget deficit. If they gave up just a modest amount of the benefits they get from living in this state and this country (and yes, the rich got that way in part because of the benefits they get from living here), we wouldn't have a budget crisis at all.

The people who declared this war were smart enough to figure out how to divide the opposition, to turn us against each other. That's why they keep winning. SFBG

COPS

CONT»

cops helped frame them? And how many killers are still wandering the streets because homicide inspectors and prosecutors took the easy way out and manufactured or suppressed evidence against the first obvious suspect — and sent away the wrong person?

When Harris leaves office next month, a new district attorney will take over responsibility for this mess. It's not possible, given the limited resources of the department, to go back and review every single case that Sanders and Hendrix worked. But the Conley case involved a key witness who was paid by the cops — that is, an informant getting public money. It's perfectly legal to pay informants — as long as defense lawyers know that a witness was on the tab at the time of trial. But that didn't happen in Conley's case — and there may be many others.

Harris' successor will have to take on the problems of the crime lab mess and continue to review cases that may be tainted by bad forensic techniques. But he or she needs to assign someone to go back over all of the cases in which Sanders and Hendrix used paid informants and see if any of those convictions need to be reviewed.

In the meantime, Chief George Gascón ought to take the opportunity to review police policies for paying snitches who then take the stand in court. There's abundant evidence that the current system has serious problems. SFBG

HOMELESSNESS

CONT»

Care Not Cash catapulted Newsom into the limelight. His self-deprecating charm conveyed the message: "The status quo simply isn't working." In the end, benefits were slashed and perpetual shelter vacancies were created while shelter-seekers were turned away. Food lines exploded.

Newsom could have used his power to raise the money to house people — without stealing it from other destitute people. He chose not to.

The next year Newsom ran for mayor and simultaneously put an anti aggressive panhandling initiative on the ballot. In classic Newsom strategy, the proposition loosely defined the term "aggressive" and bizarrely required, but did not fund, substance abuse treatment for perpetrators.

It was the meanest campaign in three decades. Several violent acts were wrongly attributed to homeless people. The Golden Gate Restaurant Association put out billboards claiming homeless people spread venereal disease. Once implemented, the initiative made no visible impact on the number of panhandlers in San Francisco.

Most recently, Newsom introduced Proposition L, an ordinance that could put people in jail for 30 days on a second offense just for sitting or lying on the sidewalk. It passed, and set the parameters for very nasty dialogue about poor people once again in San Francisco.

All three of these votes took place very strictly along class lines — affluent people supported them and poor people did not.

Homelessness is not a lifestyle choice; it's a symptom of poverty. Yet Newsom's legacy of hatred against homeless people has made it difficult to amass the public support needed to create true solutions. Overstating his accomplishments and spreading myths about homeless people sets us back. It gives San Franciscans the impression homeless people have the help they need but simply choose to remain out on the cold hard pavement.

In a city filled with thousands of destitute people, it is now illegal to sleep unsheltered. After Newsom's plaster media façade crumbles, this will be his lasting legacy. SFBG

Jennifer Freedenbadch is executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness.

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Wilbur Storey, statement of the aims of the *Chicago Times*, 1861

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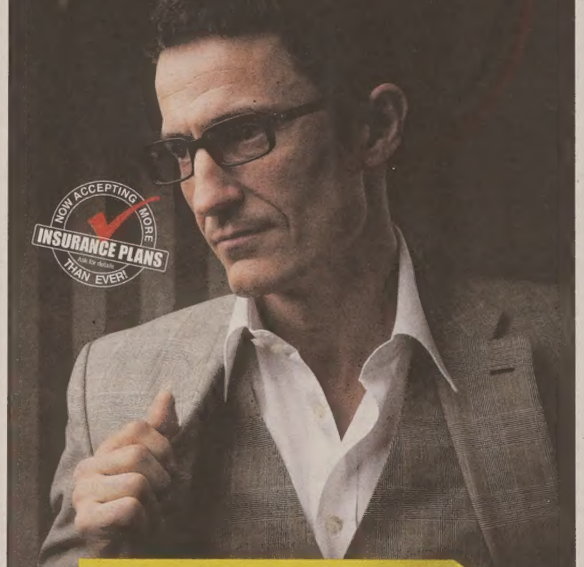

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Weighing a landlord's promise

Parkmerced developer says rent control will be protected under new plan, but tenant advocates voice concerns

By Rebecca Bowe
rebeccab@sfbg.com

Emotions ran high at meetings held by the San Francisco Planning Commission about a massive overhaul of Parkmerced, a housing complex located next to San Francisco State University that is a neighborhood unto itself.

The plan envisions tearing down 1940s-era garden apartments and townhomes to make way for new low-rises and highrises that would contain a mix of rental housing and for-sale units. Over the course of a construction project spanning three decades, Parkmerced would expand to 8,900 units — enough to triple the number of residents who can now be accommodated. Final approval for the project is expected in March at the earliest.

Some 150 residents turned out at a Dec. 9 special meeting held near Parkmerced to make it more accessible for seniors and people with limited mobility. Although commissioners had planned to open with a staff presentation, residents protested and demanded to speak first, and their request was granted. After listening to residents comment for hours, commissioners continued the discussion until the Dec. 16 meeting, which drew a smaller turnout.

While some residents were pleased by the plans, the majority who attended the first meeting expressed alarm and anxiety. People aired concerns about the long construction timeline, increased density, traffic congestion, and the impact the plan would have on a well-established, multigenerational community. Many of the speakers had been born at Parkmerced or raised families there. The comments portrayed an economically diverse neighborhood supporting close-knit circles of friends and family.

One question that seemed to have residents rattled most was whether they could trust the developer's promise that their rent control would be preserved, even after their existing apartments have been torn down.

Among them was octogenarian Robert Pender, a founding member of the Parkmerced Residents' Organization, who hobbled from his wheelchair to the podium to deliver his statement for the public record. "Parkmerced is my home, and I'm not going to be evicted because some landlord wants to make some more money," he announced. After making his comments, Pender turned to face the audience, lifted his cane in the air, and issued a rally cry that captured the sentiment of the evening: "fight!"

Under the development plan, 1,500 apartments would be razed to make way for new residential units. The midcentury garden apartments open out to shared courtyards and patios. Many house tenants who've lived at Parkmerced for decades. For elderly residents or those who have disabilities, the exceptionally low rent makes it possible for them to stay in San Francisco despite limited income.

From the outset, Parkmerced Investors LLC and Stellar Management have promised existing tenants that they will be relocated to replacement units with roughly the same square footage, where they'll continue to pay the same monthly rates and keep their rent control. The developer has even promised to keep the existing apartments intact until the new units are available so that none of the residents will have to move twice.

"Our promise to our residents is that we will preserve the rent control," said P.J. Johnston, a spokesperson for the developer. "Our attorneys believe that the rent-control protections are absolutely ironclad."

Johnston emphasized the big picture: "For decades, progressive San Francisco has been talking about the need for developing large chunks of affordable housing, for increasing density on the west side, and for creating more housing around transit. Here we finally have the opportunity to do all that while introducing major transit improvements and extending rent control."

An artist's rendering of the new Parkmerced, with more highrises and fewer garden apartments.

The landlord's promise of continued rent control is written into a development agreement, a contract between the developer and the city that would be filed along with permits and entitlements for the property. Any subsequent owner would also have to adhere to the terms of the agreement.

Despite those assurances, tenant advocates speaking at the Dec. 9 meeting sounded the alarm that the guarantee could be called into question in court if the developer or a new owner ever sought to challenge it. The Costa-Hawkins Act, passed in 1995, prohibits rent control on newly constructed units, and San Francisco's rent ordinance guarantees rent control only for units built before 1979.

"It is disingenuous for the Parkmerced landlord and for city staff to assure tenants that they will have rent-controlled replacement units after their units are demolished," noted Polly Marshall, a tenant commissioner on the San Francisco Rent Board who spoke as an individual before the Planning Commission. "We simply don't know if this will be the case."

Marshall said the agreement

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10 »

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ALERTS

By Nicole Dial
news@sfbg.com

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 22

Floyd Westerman Retrospective
You may remember him for his role in "Dances with Wolves" as Chief Ten Bears and as a country western singer/songwriter. But Floyd Westerman, a.k.a. Red Crow, was also an outspoken activist for Native Americans and the environment. A new documentary by Steve Jacobson explores his later life and activism. Along with the film, there will also be a social hour at 6:30 and a discussion following the film.
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THURSDAY, DEC. 23

Festivus 2010
San Francisco's legendary Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and pot activist Ed Rosenthal's Green Aid unite to present a night of fundraising for the Medical Marijuana Legal Defense and Education Fund. The bash features an airing of grievances, feats of strength, the annual meeting of Dessert First Club, and live music and entertainment including The Phat Fly Girls and burlesque. Creative dress and cross-dressing encouraged.
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SUNDAY, DEC 26

Get Your Spawn On
Join Brent Plater on a stroll through Muir Woods National Monument to learn more about coho and steelhead salmon and how to help them survive. The walk also features a search for endangered salmon in Redwood Creek. Make sure to wear something warm and bring your hiking boots.
10–12 p.m., free with RSVP
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TUESDAY, DEC 28

Castro Queer-in
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Noon–2 p.m., Free
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POLITICS
Sup. David Chiu and the empty mayor's seat, congressional Republicans push for easier bankruptcy laws, and SF rallies support for WikiLeaks

NOISE
Our top 10 lists are up! Check out what K. Flay, Amp Live, Delorean, Weekend, and more bopped their heads to in 2010

PIXEL VISION
Arthur Szyk and his political cartoon art hit the Legion of Honor, vegan Christmas entrees, Kung Pao Kosher Comedy, more

SEX SF
Because there's no reason why you can't cruise through XXXmas: we line up the week's sexiest events under the mistletoe

Parkmerced CONT»

could be susceptible to a legal challenge, given recent court rulings in Los Angeles and Santa Monica finding that the Ellis Act and the Costa-Hawkins Act preempted any contracts brokered with the municipalities. In each case, signed agreements between a developer and a city were dissolved in California courts.

"There's nothing in state law that says that when you demolish rent-controlled housing, it has to be replaced with rent-controlled housing," said Dean Preston, director of Tenants Together, a statewide tenant advocacy group. "I don't think the city or the developer can make those guarantees."

Preston added that the problem would be intensified if the property is conveyed to a new owner who didn't make the same commitments, and acknowledged that he didn't perceive a surefire way to guarantee enforceability. "It's not the developer's fault, and it's not the city's fault," Preston added. "Ultimately this needs to be addressed In Sacramento."

City staff and the developer seemed responsive to the concerns. In comments submitted to commissioners Dec. 9, Marshall said the development agreement should be amended to specify that the developer agreed to waive any rights to challenge the requirements of the agreement. The following week, at the Dec. 16 meeting, planning staff distributed revised copies of the agreement that had been changed to include that language.

During a staff presentation at the Dec. 16 meeting, mayoral development advisor Michael Yarne addressed the rent-control question in a detailed presentation. "The city wants to protect existing tenants," Yarne told commissioners. "It is not the city's intent to leave existing tenants vulnerable."

Under Costa-Hawkins, Yarne said, exceptions to the rent-control prohibition apply in cases where a municipality has made a valuable contribution to a developer for a residential project in exchange for the waiver of rights under Costa-Hawkins.

> "It's disingenuous to assure tenants that they will have rent-controlled replacement units after their units are demolished."
> Polly Marshall

Yarne ticked off a slew of contributions he believed would pass muster in a court of law as enough to qualify for the exception. Among other perks, maximum density controls for the site would be eliminated; the height and bulk for new buildings would be increased beyond what's normally allowed; the city would not assess impact fees for the replacement units; the amount of permitted commercial mixed-use development for Parkmerced's zoning category would be substantially increased; and the development rights would be frozen for 30 years with no required milestones.

"We believe this satisfies the public-assistance exception," Yarne said. He noted that the document was drafted with feedback from City Attorney Dennis Herrera.

Tenant rights activist Calvin Welch, who had not yet seen the latest draft of the development agreement when the Guardian caught up with him, said "we're agnostic" on the rent-control provision until having had a chance to carefully vet the final agreement. Yet he said the tenants were "absolutely right to be concerned," given the recent legal precedent.

Sup. Sean Elsbernd, whose District 7 includes Parkmerced, said he tuned into the hearings though he did not attend. Elsbernd said he would feel comfortable moving forward with the plan as long as he had assurance from the City Attorney's Office that the agreement was enforceable. "I don't want to see that project go forward without certainty," he said.

Christina Olague, vice president of the Planning Commission, acknowledged the strong concerns voiced by residents about the coming changes to the property. "We have to be sensitive to the emotions that we witnessed that day," Olague said. "We have to balance out a lot of different needs."

At the Dec. 16 meeting, more residents made comments echoing the furious opposition expressed on Dec. 9. At the same time, a small contingent of residents who favored the plan turned out to urge commissioners to approve it.

"I have witnessed consistent honesty from one source — the owner of Parkmerced, Rob Rosania," Daniel Phillips, who identified himself as president of the Board of Directors of the Parkmerced Residents' Organization, noted in written comments submitted to commissioners. "As long as I have known Rob Rosania and Stellar Management, they have made promises and kept them."

Yet it was clear that many other tenants were not convinced, and on Dec. 9, several lamented the idea that their homes would be knocked down and their longstanding community impacted by the new development.

Residents who oppose the development recently formed a new residents organization called the Parkmerced Action Coalition. Members of that group are opposed to the wholesale demolition of the 1,500 garden apartments and would rather see them retrofitted and preserved.

"We are living in panic," a woman who had lived in Parkmerced for many years told commissioners. "I am completely opposed to the tear-down of our community." SFBG

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The large cast of mayoral hopefuls includes (from left) SFPUC head Ed Harrington, Sheriff Michael Hennessey, Sup. David Chiu, former Mayor Art Agnos, Sup. David Campos, and Democratic Party chair Aaron Peskin. | PHOTOS OF HARRINGTON, HENNESSEY, AND AGNOS BY LUKE THOMAS/FOG CITY JOURNAL

Mayoral dynamics

Supervisors survey the tricky path to Room 200

By Steven T. Jones
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Despite the best efforts of Sup. Chris Daly and some of his progressive colleagues to create an orderly transfer of authority in the city's most powerful office, the selection of a successor to Mayor Gavin Newsom will come down to a frantic, unpredictable, last-minute drama starting a few days into the new year.

The board has convened to hear public testimony and consider choosing a new mayor three times, each time delaying the decision with little discussion by any supervisor except Daly, who pleaded with his colleagues on Dec. 14 to "Say something, the people deserve it," and asking, "Are we going to take our charge?"

The current board will get one more crack at making the decision Jan. 4, a day after the California Constitution calls for Newsom to assume his duties as lieutenant governor — although Newsom has threatened to delay his swearing-in so Daly and company don't get to the make the decision.

"I can't just walk away and see everything blow up. And there are a few politicians in this town that want to serve an ideological agenda," Newsom told KCBS radio reporter Barbara Taylor on Dec. 16, two days after praising the board for its "leadership and stewardship" in revising and unanimously approving the city's bid to host the America's Cup.

Newsom and his fiscally conservative political base fear that the board's progressive majority will nominate one of its own as mayor, whereas Newsom told Taylor, "The board should pick a caretaker and not a politician — that's my criteria."

Some board members strongly disagree. "It's not his to decide. Besides, what's not ideological? That doesn't make sense. Everyone's ideological," Sup. John Avalos told the Guardian, a point echoed by other progressives on the board and even many political moderates in town, who privately complain that Newsom's stand is hypocritical, petty, and not in the city's best interests.

The Guardian has interviewed a majority of members of the Board of Supervisors about the mayoral succession question, and all expect the board to finally start discussing mayoral succession and making nominations on Jan. 4.

But whether the current board, or the newly elected board that is sworn in on Jan. 8, ultimately chooses the new mayor is anyone's guess. And at Guardian press time, who that new mayor will be (and what conditions that person will agree to) was still a matter of wild speculation, elaborate conspiracy theories, and backroom deal making.

GETTING TO SIX

A majority of supervisors say there's a simple reason why the board hasn't seriously discussed mayoral succession since it unanimously approved the procedures for doing so Nov. 23 (see "The process begins," Nov. 30). Everyone seems to know that nobody has the required six votes.

Avalos said he thinks the current board is better situated to choose the new mayor because of its experience, even though he voted for the delay on Dec. 14 (in an 8-3 vote, with Daly and Sups. Ross Mirkarimi and David Campos in dissent). "I supported the delay because we were not closer to having a real discussion about it than we were the week before," Avalos told us, noting that those who were pushing for Campos "didn't do enough to broaden the coalition to support David Campos."

For his part, Campos agreed that "the progressive majority has not figured out what it wants to do yet," a point echoed by Mirkarimi: "I don't think there's a plan." Sup. Sophie Maxwell, who made both the successful motions to delay the vote, told us, "There's a lot more thinking that people need to do."

"We do not yet have consensus," Chiu said of his reasons for supporting the delay, noting that state conflict-of-interest and open government laws also make it difficult for the board to have a frank discussion about who the new mayor should be.

For example, Chiu is barred from even declaring publicly that he wants the job and describing how he might lead, although he is widely known to be in the running.

The board can't officially name a new mayor until the office is vacant. Sup. Bevan Dufty, who is already running for mayor, told us the board should wait for Newsom to act. "I felt the resignation should be in effect before the board makes a move," Dufty said.

Sups. Sean Elsbernd, Carmen Chu, Michela Alioto-Pier, and Eric Mar did not return the Guardian's calls for comment.

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

Adding to the drama of the mayoral succession decision will be the new Board of Supervisors' inaugural meeting on Jan. 8, when the first order of business will be the vote for a new board president, who will also immediately become acting mayor if the office has been vacated by then and the previous board hasn't chosen a new mayor.

While Newsom and his downtown allies are clearly banking on the hope that the new board will select a politically moderate caretaker mayor, something that three of the four new supervisors say they want (see "Class of 2010," Dec. 8), the reality is that the new board will have the same basic ideological breakdown as the current board and some personal relationships that could benefit progressives Chiu and Avalos.

Daly said downtown is probably correct that the current board is more likely than the new one to directly elect a progressive mayor who might run for the office in the fall, such as Campos or former board President Aaron Peskin. But he thinks the new board is likely to elect a progressive as president, probably Campos, Chiu, or Avalos, and that person could end up lingering as acting mayor indefinitely.

"They really haven't thought through Jan. 8. Downtown doesn't like to gamble, and I think it's a gamble," Daly said. "There's a decent chance that we'll get a more progressive mayor out of the leadership vote for board president."

Avalos said it "would be a disaster" for the board president to linger as acting mayor for a long time, complicating the balance of power at City Hall. But he wouldn't mind holding the board gavel. "I think I would do a good job as board president, but I'm not going to scratch and claw my way to be board president," Avalos said. "I'd be just as happy to be chair of the Budget Committee again."

Avalos said he thinks it's important to have a mayor who is willing to work closely with board progressives and to support new revenues as part of the budget solution, which is why he would be willing to support Chiu, Campos, or Mirkarimi for mayor, saying "All of them could do a good job."

Given the progressive majority on the board, it's also possible that there will be a lingering standoff between supporters for Chiu, a swing vote in budget and other battles who has yet to win the full confidence of all the progressive supervisors, and former Mayor Art Agnos, who has offered to serve as a caretaker. Some see Agnos as more progressive than the other alternatives pushed by moderates, including Sheriff Michael Hennessey and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission head Ed Harrington.

Moderates like Dufty are hopeful that a couple of progressives might break off to support Hennessey ("From the first minute, he knows everything you'd need to know in an emergency situation," Dufty said) or Harrington ("I could see him stepping in and closing the budget deficit and finding a good compromise on pension reform," Dufty said) after a few rounds of voting.

Mirkarimi is openly backing Agnos. "He has evolved, as I've known him, in the days since being mayor," Mirkarimi said. "I think we've spent too much time on finding the progressive guy to be mayor than on setting up what a progressive caretaker administration would look like." And then there are the wild cards, like state Sen. Mark Leno and City Attorney Dennis Herrera. Herrera's a declared candidate and Leno has made it clear that he'd take the job if it were offered to him.

Given the fact that supervisors can't vote for themselves, it's difficult for any of them to win. "I don't think it's likely that a member of the Board of Supervisors will get enough votes to be mayor," Avalos told us, although he said that Chiu is the one possible exception.

But to get to six votes, Chiu would have to have most of the progressive supervisors supporting him and some moderates, such as D10 Supervisor-elect Malia Cohen (whom Chiu endorsed), D8's Scott Wiener, and/or Chu (who might be persuaded to help elect the city's first Chinese American mayor).

That would be a delicate dance, although it's as likely as any of the other foreseeable scenarios. SFBG

In the mix: Political observers have mentioned (from left) Paul Henderson, David Onek, Jim Hammer, and Katherine Feinstein as possible replacements for Kamala Harris.

The next district attorney

Buried in all the hoopla over mayoral succession is another key job — and more political intrigue

Sarah Phelan
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By the time District Attorney Kamala Harris declared victory in the razor-close California attorney general race, two candidates had already filed to replace her. And their candidacies further complicate the delicate process of appointing a new district attorney when Harris gets sworn in Jan. 3 as the first woman and racial minority to become attorney general of California.

David Onek, a senior fellow at the Berkeley Center for Criminal Justice and a former police commissioner, filed in July and has raised $130,000 and collected 1,000 signatures.

Paul Henderson, a veteran prosecutor whom Harris tapped in 2007 as her chief administrator, filed Nov. 22 when his boss' victory in the attorney general's race looked assured.

And now Alameda County Assistant D.A. Sharmin Bock, a human trafficking expert, is reportedly mulling a bid.

Mayor Gavin Newsom has said that if Harris resigns before him, he'll heed her recommendation for her successor. But whoever Newsom, or his successor, appoints will have a major advantage as the incumbent if he or she runs in November 2011.

Unlike the interim mayor, who will have to make unpopular cuts to balance the budget, the person who fills out Harris' term will have a strong presumption of holding onto the office.

So far Harris has been silent on the topic of a replacement to the post she held since 2003, when she defeated two-term incumbent District Attorney Terence Hallinan.

A possible reason for Harris' silence is that until recently San Francisco Superior Court Presiding Judge Katherine Feinstein, the only daughter of U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, was thought to be a front-runner for the post. This perception was based on the assumption that Sen. Feinstein wanted her daughter appointed, that Newsom would obey the senator's wishes, and that no one in Democratic circles would dare to challenge Judge Feinstein in November given her mother's political influence.

But it turns out that Feinstein, 53, whose peers unanimously elected her to succeed James J. McBride for a two-year term effective Jan. 1, 2011 as the Superior Court's presiding judge, couldn't legally accept an appointment anyway and would have to run in the November race.

And Superior Court spokeswoman Ann Donlan told the Guardian that Feinstein does not intend to give up her position as presiding judge. "Judge Feinstein has told court employees and her judicial colleagues that she has no intention of relinquishing her judicial duties in San Francisco," Donlan stated.

THE HEIR APPARENT

That leaves Henderson as Harris' presumptive heir; Onek, who is married to the daughter of Michael Dukakis, is a political force to be reckoned with; and former prosecutor Bill Fazio and police commissioner and former prosecutor Jim Hammer are possible appointments.

District Attorney's Office spokesperson Erica Derryck would say nothing on the record about the appointment other than that it's the mayor's decision to make. But former D.A. Office spokesperson Debbie Mesloh noted that Harris has outlined the qualities she is seeking.

"Kamala has mentioned publicly that she is looking for someone with integrity who understands how the office works and will take over in such a way that allows people to continue their work," Mesloh said. "That may sound like small potatoes, but it's a big deal given how many folks work in the D.A.'s Office."

Public Defender Jeff Adachi told us he finds it interesting that neither Harris nor Newsom has issued an endorsement in favor of anyone. "The silence is deafening," Adachi said, "But what's absolutely missing is a process to select a new district attorney. The D.A's job involves major responsibilities in terms of running and managing a large law office, so I think there should be some kind of process."

Adachi said the most important qualification is an understanding of how the D.A.'s Office operates and the respect of line staff. "That's where trial experience comes in. You want someone with experience of homicide trials and serious cases. You're overseeing a staff of trial attorneys, investigators, and their support staff — who are all litigators."

Adachi warns that having a caretaker in that office for 11 months would create havoc. "The best choice would be someone who would allow for a smooth transition and have the qualifications and interest in running for office," he said.

Sup. David Chiu, who became the first Chinese-American Board of Supervisors president in January 2008 and previously worked as a criminal prosecutor in the D.A.'s Office, has often been mentioned as a candidate. He told the Guardian that he enjoyed his time as a prosecutor but wants to stay put, for now.

"Kamala Harris did a good job in terms of her prosecutorial approach, and I understand she is anxious to make sure her legacy is not repealed," Chiu said. "I'm happy to serve wherever to further the public interest, and the board is in a fragile and unstable place."

IT WON'T BE SUP. ELSBERND

Former D.A. Terence Hallinan, who served two terms as a supervisor before being elected D.A., thinks it's a big advantage to come from the board. "I knew how to use the budget process to get what I needed," he said. "I held the key to that door."

But a city insider who asked to remain anonymous said that if Chiu is thinking D.A., he'd be setting his sights too low. "The brass ring is right there for Chiu as mayor," the source said.

According to the city charter, the D.A. must be a San Francisco resident who has been licensed to practice law in all California courts for at least five years. Sup. Sean Elsbernd, who qualified for the bar in 2000, has been mentioned in some circles. But Elsbernd told us that the rumors that Newsom would appoint him as D.A. and Newsom's Chief of Staff Steve Kawa as D7 supervisor are baseless.

"They are just saying that because I'm an attorney," said Elsbernd, who worked as a law clerk with Nielsen, Merksamer, Parinello, Mueller, & Naylor and with the D.A.'s Office prior to his August 2004 appointment to the board by Newsom and his November 2004 election.

So now the money remains on Newsom to appoint Henderson, who is a gay African American. "It's important to take the diversity of the city into account," our City Hall source said. "And Henderson can do the job. He's extremely capable; the lawyer types like him; he reaches out to all groups and political factions; and his appointment would be a signal to the Democratic Party that whoever appoints him takes diversity seriously."

Hallinan said he thinks Henderson will get the nod. "I think Kamala wants to keep a hand in that office," Hallinan said. "And Paul is a nice guy, very competent, a good administrator — though not real experienced at trying cases."

The D.A. doesn't have time to try cases because there are administrative matters to deal with every day, Hallinan noted. "But trial experience is good because, although the job is administrative, you are selecting who should try what case," he said. "So unless you have experience, it's hard to judge what resources you have to be devoted."

Fazio, who lost to Hallinan in the D.A.'s race in the 1990s, says he wants Henderson to get the appointment. "Henderson has been a loyal deputy. Onek has never been in a courtroom, and he doesn't even work in San Francisco," Fazio said.

Fazio doesn't think Henderson's bid will be hampered by ongoing crime lab and prosecutorial scandals in the D.A.'s Office since he wasn't directly involved in the crime lab and police misconduct cases. "The biggest challenge for Paul will be turning all that around and running for office," Fazio said. Insiders agreed that unless something highly unusual happens, an incumbent Henderson would get widespread political support in November.

But Onek sounds like he's in the race for the duration, and he downplayed his lack of trial experience. "The bottom line is that I'm not going to be the chief trial attorney," Onek said. "The role of the D.A. is to set policy, have a vision for the office, manage the office, work collaboratively with the community and law enforcement agencies, and finally, bring resources in from outside."

"I'm spending my time building a criminal justice movement and not focusing on the politics of it all," he added. "It's speculation and the winds change every day."

Onek observed that his entire career has been about criminal justice reform. "Kamala Harris did a great job of starting on that reform, and we need someone who can step in and continue the reform." SFBG

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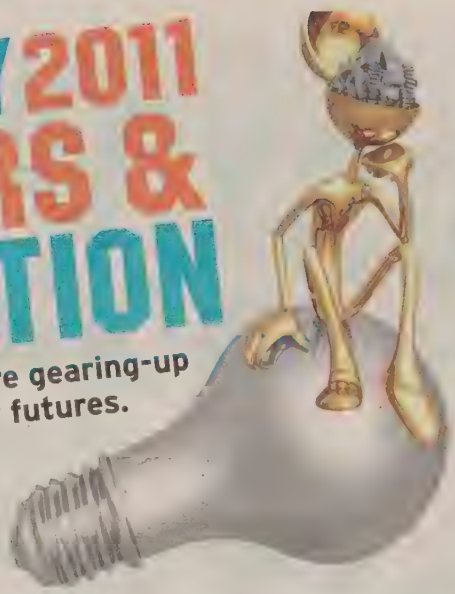

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food + drink

Spend it wisely: The wonderful Campannini in the Marina balances tony with taste in dishes like burano cheese over broccoli rabe.
GUARDIAN PHOTO BY RORY MCNAMARA

The tax cutter cometh

By Paul Reidinger
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DINE It does fall to me occasionally to check up on our town's tonier heterosexuals, who can be found cavorting in their infamous and restaurant-dotted playland beyond the magic mountains of Pacific Heights. (As for the homos: I have a pretty clear picture of *that* splendid circus.) Now that the rich, aided by their loyal apparatchiks in Congress, have secured another round of tax relief for themselves the question naturally arises regarding how they will spend their fresh loot, which we the taxpayers are so wisely borrowing from our BFFs, the Chinese.

Judging by the evidence on display at Capannina, a wonderful Italian restaurant on Union Street, they're spending it prudently — even wisely! — although the sample size is small. It's small because the restaurant itself is on the small side: a mid-block storefront beautifully done up with pistachio-colored walls, banquettes upholstered in a timelessly elegant fabric of gold and claret stripes, a tall bar of burnished wood at the rear of the dining room, and, hanging over that bar, a contrivance of wrought iron that resembles a bit of belle epoque signage from a Paris Métro station, or the undercarriage of a bistro table that somehow found itself hanging upside down from the ceiling, like a bat.

Capannina's look reminds us that restaurant design, like clothing fashion, is a little like calculating a reëntry angle for a space capsule: too steep an angle and the craft burns up, too shallow and it bounces off into space for eternity. The window, the sweet spot, is actually rather tight and involves some clever blend of old and new, unexpected and familiar, soothing and stimulating. Capannina has worked these tensions into a nice balance; the design does enough to attract your attention briefly without making intrusive demands. It is handsome without becoming narcissistic — no small feat in a culture like ours — and in this important respect it looks and feels just as a restaurant should. When it fills up, though, it does get loud to the point of making conversation difficult.

Several of Capannina's blood relations, including Café Tiramisu and Brindisi are to be found on Belden Lane, whose European atmospherics and restaurant population density keep the standards pretty sharp. Capannina is an outlier or outpost, but it seems to enjoy an indirect benefit from its siblings' competitions; the kitchen's Italian cooking is, like the design of the restaurant itself, a tight weave of tradition and controlled innovation.

One little flourish I particularly like in Italian cooking is a nuzzle of chili heat. The gamberi picante con polenta ($14), or spicy prawns, did indeed leave a naughty tingle on our lips, soothed by the balm of basil aioli. Even better was the polenta, which appeared as a small, crisp, well-formed cake, hardly larger than the shrimp themselves, instead of the more usual engulfing blob.

Nothing says early winter around here quite like crab, and Capannina's kitchen turns out estimable crab cakes, or polpettina di granchio ($14). These were served in threes, with tomato-basil aioli, and were quite small ("mini," in menu-speak). The downsizing might have contributed to their sublime, almost fritter-like crispness. I love big, fat crab cakes, at least when I start eating them, but crab is rich, and what is wonderful for the first few bites isn't necessarily as wonderful by the last one.

We found the carpaccio di manzo ($13) to be a corrective, with its purifying, slightly astringent presences of fresh arugula leaves and mustard dill sauce, along with a generous sprinkling of cracked black peppercorns on the tissue of beef. Parmesan cheese, well-represented here in leaf-like shavings, can go either way, like the fabled independent voter, or many a man in this zero-gravity city. In this dish it flexed both of its biceps, one rich, the other pungent.

To my mind there is no better chicken preparation in the world than *al mattone*, or under a brick, and Capannina's version ($19 for a half-bird) couldn't be improved on: crisp, golden skin all over, juicy flesh cooked through to the bone, and not much bone. The leaking juice helped animate the chard and crisp potato dice arranged along the side of the plate.

And about the cannoli ($8): exceptional, in a word. These were finger-sized pastry flutes, boldly fried, oozing mascarpone laced with candied fruit — a kind of creamed panettone — and served with an espresso sauce for dipping. Caution, though; they were rich beyond any tax-cutter's wildest fantasies. SFBG

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Grids and gridiron

By L.E. Leone
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CHEAP EATS Coach and me went to Benders many nights in a row. "Benders," she likes to say. "It's what's for dinner." But I don't know. I love their burgers and tots. And their pulled pork, come to think of it, rebounded me nicely from that dollop of whatever-the-crap-that-was at Bonnie's last week. But my sense of adventure begins to feel compromised after more than one night in a row at the same place.

Nevertheless, neither one of us has a TV. And we thought we should watch us some football. I swear our intention was to go to poetry readings, too. But we tended not to want to leave the bar.

It's weird, liking football again, this time from a softer, less angular angle. For me, the football part of my friendship with Coach is the perfect blend of strategy (possible color-combinations, baggy vs. tight uniforms), surreality (keep reading), and camaraderie. It reminds me of watching the Niners with Wayway back in the day, only Coach and I seldom look at the TV and the plays we draw up on our napkins look a lot more like fruit trees in the end.

Moreover, I'm pretty sure Wayway never said (although he may well have been thinking it) during Monday Night Football: "This would be a lot more interesting if they were lesbians."

"They *will* be, Coach," I reminded her. "For now, just imagine."

The Ravens were playing the Texans.

We talked about relationships. We talked about depression. We talked about the holidays, and who I will meet and where we will be and who will like me. And always eventually it came back to the little TV at the other end of the bar.

"I like when the little guys dart around," she said. "They're like shortstops, and second base."

"That's the spirit," I said. "Now we're talking."

Coach has a little notebook that she writes her football information in. There is a column of names. Most of our friends already know that they are playing football come spring. One or two even know how. I do! That's why I get to be Coach's coaching staff, confidant, and — if I don't blow it — on-field captain. We already know who our quarterback will be and have a pretty good idea of the blockers. Less certain is who will play weasel, and the ever-important position Coach calls the "far runners." Myself, I am proud to be penciled in, according to her little notebook, at shortstop.

Which looks to me a little like the position formerly known as tight end. But when I mentioned this to Coach she got the giggles. "Tight end!" she said. "That's perfect!"

I should stop writing about us. We are going to take this league by storm. And it might be better if no one sees us gathering on the horizon, like dark, sexy, undertalented and overburgered but height-weight proportionate clouds.

I'm just too excited to leave it alone!

OK, focus. My secret agent lady Sal and me didn't want to sit in her rental car at the beach and watch surfer boys change clothes in her rear view mirror on an empty stomach, so we stopped off first for Korean.

Every Saturday a group of three or four food trucks circle the wagons down at McCoppin and Valencia around lunch time, and then some. I tried to go there once before with Mr. Wong when we were on our kimchi burrito kick, but Seoul on Wheels musta had a flat tire that week.

This time it was there! That's the good news. The bad news is that its Korean burritos, which it calls korritos, are premade and have sour cream, which is a big mistake. An even bigger mistake: way too much rice and way not enough meat, or kimchi, or therefore flavor.

Weak. Weak. Weak.

On the other hand, I had a bulgogi taco and it had no rice at all. Small small small. But ... delicious!

There's also a Filipino truck there, which is pretty good, and I forget which taco truck — *taco* tacos, I mean. Next time I'll try those. SFBG

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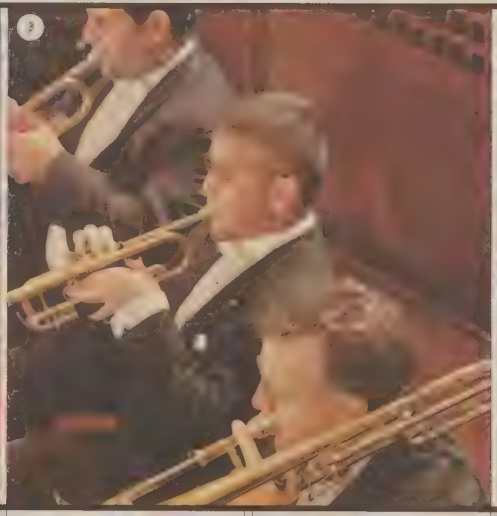

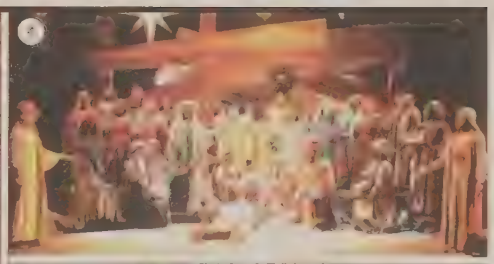

WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 22

DANCE

The Christmas Ballet
Smuin Ballet's *The Christmas Ballet* (previewed previously and now a mini-review) is a welcome antidote to the sentimentality surrounding the holiday season. The first part pays lip service to more or less classical music but the show really takes off in the second half, "The Cool Christmas." Matthew Linzer as Elvis and Robin Cornwell, giving life to Eartha Kitt, are show-stealers. But then so is Ryan Camou's high-leaping drummer boy. This entertainment — and that's what it is — is ballet-based though leavened with Cajun, Irish, polka, waltz, hula, jazz, and tap. This year choreographer-in-residence Amy Seiwert's added a spritely "Carol of the Bells"; her stark and sculpturally intriguing "Noel Nouvelet," based on a 15th-century carol, still looks strong. The late Smuin's wide-ranging musical taste allowed him to come with intriguing versions of familiar material. In this respect, at least, Seiwert seems to follow in his footsteps. **(Rita Felciano)**

Wed/22–Thurs/23, 8 p.m. (also Wed/22, 2 p.m.);
Fri/24, 2 p.m., $4–$62
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
Novellus Theater
701 Mission, SF
(415) 978-2787
www.ybca.org

PERFORMANCE

SantaLand Diaries
David Sedaris, one of America's favorite humorists, got his start with *SantaLand Diaries*, an essay on his stint working as an elf in the holiday spectacle at Macy's. Sedaris first shared this humorous holiday anecdote on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition* in 1992. Since then it has been adapted for the stage by Joe Mantello as a solo one-act. David Sinaiko stars as Crumpet the elf in Combined Artform's annual presentation of holiday amusement and laughs. The wacky zaniness of the holidays is captured by Sedaris like none other. Note that no one under 16 will be admitted. **(Emmaly Wiederholt)**

Wed/22–Fri/24 and Dec. 26–30, 8 p.m.;
(also Thurs/23, 5 p.m.; Fri/24, 3 p.m.) $20–$30
Eureka Theatre
215 Jackson, SF
www.cafearts.com

MUSIC

San Francisco Symphony
In the last few frenzied days before Christmas, take time to get into the spirit with the San Francisco Symphony in *'Twas the Night*, a program of holiday favorites. From "Good King Wenceslas" to "The 12 Days of Christmas," this assortment of beloved seasonal tunes will put the whole family in good cheer. Ages 17 and under are half-price and complimentary festive beverages follow the performance, so join in the jolly fun. With Ragnar Bohlin conducting, Robert Huw Morgan on organ, Lisa Vroman singing soprano, and Joan Cifarelli on piano, traditional carols and songs come to life as never before. **(Wiederholt)**

Wed/22–Thurs/23, 7:30 p.m.;
Fri/24, 2 p.m., $15–$67
Davies Symphony Hall
201 Van Ness, SF
(415) 864-6000
www.sfsymphony.org

THURSDAY
DECEMBER 23

FILM

Sita Sings the Blues
Inspired by the sudden decay of her own marriage, Nina Paley recreated what she's called "the greatest break-up story ever told," the tale of Sita and Rama from Sanskrit epic the *Ramayama*. The resulting film, produced on the director's home computer, has been hailed as a miracle of contemporary animation, blending various artistic styles with the music of 1920s blues singer Annette Hanshaw. Using that music created a copyright suit against Paley, who has since released the movie online as part of the Free Culture movement. These screenings benefit the Red Vic, courtesy of the director and Shadow Distribution. **(Ryan Prendiville)**

Thurs/23 and Sun/26, 7:15 and 9:15 p.m.
(also Sun/26, 2 and 4 p.m.),
$6–$9
Red Vic Movie House
1727 Haight, SF
(415) 668-3994
www.redvicmoviehouse.com

PERFORMANCE

"Joyful Noise: A Gospel Celebration of Christmas"
The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre is in the midst of its 30th anniversary seasons — and like all previous seasons, 2010-11 is dedicated to "exploring, celebrating, and reflecting the lives of African Americans." But it's been a bittersweet year, with the deaths of founding artistic director Stanley E. Williams and founding executive director Quentin Easter, a longtime couple, coming just weeks apart. LHT has dedicated this year's spin on its traditional holiday gospel musical, *Black Nativity*, to the pair; the popular performance's new title and script were created with Williams' input before he died. But don't expect a somber affair — the play honors the spirits of its founders with dance, humor, and powerful vocals, and promises to bring joy to all ages, cultures, and faiths. **(Cheryl Eddy)**

Through Dec. 31
Thurs, 8 p.m.; Fri/24 and Dec. 31, 2 p.m.;
(also Dec. 31, 7 p.m.); Sun/26, 4 p.m., $25–$50
Fort Mason Center
Southside Theater, Bldg D
Marina at Laguna, SF
www.lhtsf.org

EVENT

Latke Ball
While the nerdy Jews will be tittering away at Kung Pao Kosher Comedy (see below), the Jew who just wants to get her grind on (or anyone trying to duck down from tinsel) heads tonight to the annual Latke Ball, the Jewish Community Federation's annual December fundraiser — usually held Dec. 24 but stepping into the night prior this year outta respect to shabbat. Sure, there are no cutting edge DJs on the bill, but more than 1,000 observant and not-so-much Heebs who refuse to take "closed for the holidays" for an answer? This calls for a *mazel tov*! — and maybe a Manhattan. **(Caitlin Donohue)**

9 p.m.–2 a.m., $40
Ruby Skye
420 Mason, SF
(415) 777-0411
www.jewishfed.org/event/latke-ball-2010

PERFORMANCE

Kung Pao Kosher Comedy
While the Jew into sweatin' to the top 40 is dodging flailing stiletto vamps at the Latke Ball (see above), the more cerebral set heads to Kung Pao Kosher Comedy, comedian Lisa Geduldig's 18-year-old stand-up alternative to the low-fi claymation specials blasting from your roommate's TV. The annual event was birthed in a South Hadley, Mass., Chinese restaurant and serves up yucks by offbeat comedians hailing from various corners of Jewdom, all over family-style servings of rock cod with bok choy and Boca Raton-style chow mein. Headliners this year include creepy-cute comedy vet Wendy Liebman, 21-year old prodigy Nathan Habib, and Georgia-born Vietnamese-Jew Joe Nguyen. **(Donohue)**

Thurs/23–Sun/26, 5 and 8:30 p.m., $42–$62
New Asia Restaurant
772 Pacific, SF
(925) 275-9005
www.koshercomedy.com

Society decided one day that we no longer found giant men hilarious if they wore Hammer pants.

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 25

EVENT

Safeway Holiday Ice Rink
New York City has its world-famous skating rink at Rockefeller Center, blah blah blah. But why travel to the freezing-cold East Coast when you can get some downtown ice time right here in San Francisco? Possibly rocking a t-shirt while you're at it? Plunked down in the middle of Union Square, the Safeway Holiday Ice Rink offers 90-minute sessions starting on each even hour. You'll already be banged up from fighting the crowds at Macy's and (sweet Jeebus) Forever 21, so it's well worth taking a shopping time-out to channel your inner Johnny Weir as Union Square's behemoth Christmas tree twinkles overhead. **(Eddy)**

Through Jan. 17, 2011
Daily, 10 a.m.–10 p.m. (Fri-Sat, 10 a.m.-11:30 p.m.);
Dec. 31, closes at 9:30 p.m.,
$4.50–$9.50 (skate rental, $4)
Union Square
Geary and Powell, SF
www.unionsquareicerink.com

MUSIC

"13th Annual Black X Mass"
Gotta love it when you click on an event taking place Dec. 25 and it takes you to the First Satanic Church's homepage. The Black X Mass, though, is ironically a bit of a godsend. Maybe you don't celebrate Christmas, or you're unable to travel to hang with relatives — or perhaps you're planning to do both, and fully realize you'll need to decompress after a full-court press of holiday cheer. Whatever the reason, if you'll be lurking around the dark and lonely streets of San Francisco during the holidays, head to the Elbo Room for Karla LaVey and the First Satanic Church's annual Black X Mass party. Replace that Santa hat with horns and hail the stylings of Graves Brothers Deluxe, Dimesland, Los Murderachis, the Fuxedos, Theremin Wizard Barney, the Devil Dancers, and more. **(Eddy)**

9 p.m., $9.99
Elbo Room
647 Valencia, SF
(415) 552-7788
www.elbo.com

SUNDAY
DECEMBER 26

PERFORMANCE

"Gallagher's Holiday Smash Bash"
Like Sinbad, Gallagher has spent a couple decades in relative obscurity. So obscure, in fact, that's it's hard to imagine a time when he was popular. *Immensely* popular. Like, 10 televised specials between 1980 and 1987 popular. (Side note: this type of inexplicable success is known as "the Aykroyd phenomenon.") Cultural amnesia makes it difficult to admit liking the innovator of prop comedy. But the decline of Gallagher is not due to simply a change in fashion, the way society decided one day that we no longer found giant men hilarious if they wore Hammer pants. No, it's because of Carrot Top. That fucker single-handedly ruined props for everyone. Tonight, Gallagher may Sledge-O-Matic us back to a simpler time. **(Prendiville)**

7 p.m., $30
Yoshi's San Francisco
1330 Fillmore, SF
(415) 655-5600
www.yoshis.com

MONDAY
DECEMBER 27

MUSIC

Morris Day and the Time
Few can rock a suit like Morris Day. After bringing himself out of a self-imposed retirement in 2004, the funk-R&B singer and Prince collaborator released *It's About Time*, his first solo album in 12 years. Much to his fans' delight, he also got all the original members of the Time back together to begin touring again. Pieced together by Prince in 1981 as an outlet for material he didn't necessarily want to release under his own (ever-changing) name, the group eventually carried on itself, thanks in large part to the eccentric and energetic stylings of Day — who also turned in a memorable performance as the Purple One's foil in 1984's *Purple Rain*. **(Landon Moblad)**

Mon/27–Tues/28, 8 and 10 p.m.,
$30–$45
Yoshi's San Francisco
1330 Fillmore, SF
(415) 655-5600
www.yoshis.com

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 28

MUSIC

"X-mas With X (An Evening With)"
Legendary Los Angeles punk rock group X distinguished itself from other bands of its era by adding the rock-solid drumming of DJ Bonebrake, the guitar virtuosity of Billy Zoom, and the poetic lyrics and intimate vocal interplay of John Doe and Exene Cervenka. It was this distinctive blend that caught the attention of Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek, who went on to produce the band's classic first album, 1980's *Los Angeles*. At these two very special shows, Manzarek joins X on stage to perform their debut record in its entirety, lending his talents on the keys that helped shape tunes such as the throbbing "Nausea" and the set-closing "The World's A Mess, It's In My Kiss." **(Sean McCourt)**

Through Dec. 29
8 p.m., $31
Slim's
333 11th St., SF
(415) 255-0333
www.slims-sf.com SFBG

The Guardian listings deadline is two weeks prior to our Wednesday publication date. To submit an item for consideration, please include the title of the event, a brief description of the event, date and time, venue name, street address (listing cross streets only isn't sufficient), city, telephone number readers can call for more information, telephone number for media, and admission costs. Send information to Listings, the Guardian Building, 135 Mississippi St., SF, CA 94107; fax to (415) 487-2506; or e-mail (paste press release into e-mail body — no text attachments, please) to listings@sfbg.com. Digital photos may be submitted in jpeg format; the image must be at least 240 dpi and four inches by six inches in size. We regret we cannot accept listings over the phone.

(1) Smuin Ballet (see Wed/22); (2) *SantaLand Diaries* (see Wed/22); (3) San Francisco Symphony (see Wed/22); (4) Lorraine Hansberry Theatre's *Joyful Noise: A Gospel Celebration of Christmas* (see Thurs/23); (5) Joe Nguyen (see Thurs/23); (6) Gallagher (see Sun/26); (7) Morris Day (see Mon/27); (8) X (see Tues/28)

SMUIN BALLET PHOTO BY DAVID ALLEN; *SANTALAND DIARIES* PHOTO BY LUX OBSCURA; *JOYFUL NOISE* PHOTO BY MARC PAQUETTE; JOE NGUYEN PHOTO COURTESY OF KUNG PAO KOSHER COMEDY; MORRIS DAY PHOTO COURTESY MORRIS DAY ENTERTAINMENT

arts + culture

Year in video games: *Angry Birds* took over the lives of bored iPhone, iPad, and iPod owners everywhere (kill the pigs!), while *Red Dead Redemption* offered sophisticated Wild West thrills (kill the outlaws!)

Admit it: you're addicted to *Angry Birds*

GAMER 2010, TAKE ONE

Although a large portion of the world remains blissfully unaware of a shift, the game industry has silently surpassed Hollywood as the wealthiest entertainment medium. The year was more transitory than breakthrough, but 2010 boasted a number of changes. Here are seven.

Reliance on sequels and franchises The industry has long been fond of franchising, but this year was especially sequel-rific. Big sales came from recognizable powerhouses like *Call of Duty: Black Ops*, *Halo: Reach*, *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*, and *Fable III* — and these current installments offered thrills aplenty but were largely indistinguishable from last year's counterparts. It makes you wonder how long consumers will give companies their hard-earned cash for the same experience each year. The *Tony Hawk* and *Guitar Hero* franchises can attest that nothing lasts forever.

A schedule in flux With the success of November's *Call of Duty* a forgone conclusion, competitors scrambled to move their release dates well before or after the best-selling war game. The holiday season has traditionally been the most release-heavy time of year, but this year a number of big titles like *Mass Effect 2* and *Red Dead Redemption* moved release dates to spring and summer to allow them more room to breathe. While the holiday season remained congested, spreading out a few of the bigger releases helped some titles make money and relaxed the strain on consumers' time and wallets.

The game marketplace PSN and Xbox Live Arcade (XBLA) discovered profit in championing indie games. Consumers win as well: we got some truly original ideas in *Limbo*, *DeathSpank*, *Fat Princess*, *Monday Night Combat*, and *Super Meat Boy*, which commonly displayed a singularity of vision that your bigger, more focus-grouped titles lack. As an avenue for indie developers, the only route more exciting was gaming with iPhone and Facebook.

Removing the "geek" stigma On that note, everyone has a phone, and the recent explosion of iPhone and Facebook game releases just might make up more play hours than Big Three consoles combined. The success of *Angry Birds*, *Cut the Rope*, and (dear God) *Farmville* signals a willingness among casual gamers to while away hours of their lives with the best of the hardcore gamers. While industry giants like Activision say the App Store isn't worth their time, the seeds have been rigorously sown for our phones to become legitimate gaming devices.

The battle for the casual gamer While Nintendo's Wii continues to snub the classic gaming experience, Microsoft and Sony made their own leaps toward unconventional wiggle-waggle gaming with Kinect and Move, respectively. Kinect's controller-less camera shows a great deal of promise and Move allows Sony an avenue to differentiate itself from an increasingly multiplatform marketplace, but neither company has the "must-have" software to back up their technology.

Curtain call This year found music gaming down, but not out. Unremarkable entries like *Rock Band: Green Day* and *Guitar Hero:*

CONTINUES ON PAGE 22 »

Game over(load)

GAMER 2010, TAKE TWO

For the first time in my life, in 2010, I feel the weight of games yet unplayed. Soon, 2011 will begin, and the ghosts of my gaming fecklessness will lurk, dormant, on my hard drive, pregnant with the possibility of fun.

Maybe it's just that I finally got a life; I am now too busy to head out to GameStop on a Tuesday morning, come home with a new game, and only take a break — for lunch — around 7:30. Maybe games have gotten harder, or I've gotten worse — are all those mistimed jumps and bungled headshots adding up? Maybe there's a simpler answer: games have gotten better, and there are many, many more of them.

With each passing month, it grows harder to prioritize, to write off vast swathes of the medium in the hopes of maintaining a schedule that actually allows for gainful employment. Indie games are becoming more ambitious, jabbing the mega-budgeted mainstream in the ribs with the elbow of unfettered creativity. *Minecraft*, coded by Swedish programmer Markus Persson in his spare time, has attained nearly 2 million registered users, despite debuting in mid-May alongside the putative game of the year, Rockstar's cowboy epic *Red Dead Redemption*.

You also start with a backlog of old games: last year's modern classics and overlooked gems (one day, I *will* finish *Psychonauts*), not to mention the *really* old games that are increasingly available for a Monopoly-money pittance on networks like Xbox LIVE, Playstation Network, Wii Network, and Valve's potent PC-gaming service Steam — an insidious piece of software that is the gaming equivalent of having a drug dealer literally living in your house.

As if the congestion wasn't already bad enough, you can never really *finish* a game anymore. Downloadable content (DLC) has extended the shelf-life of marquee titles almost indefinitely, allowing developers to graft on missions, characters, and crucial plot developments long after the game has been boxed and shipped, thanks

CONTINUES ON PAGE 22 »

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Take one CONT»

Warriors of Rock had declining sales figures to match. Developer Harmonix continued to innovate in its main franchise, adding a keyboard to *Rock Band 3* and the ability to play with a real 6-string guitar, and Harmonix's *Dance Central* demonstrated the best use of Kinect's technology so far. But neither release was the blockbuster needed to revive a dwindling genre.

Rise of the DLC Disturbingly, a number of games are being released half in the box and half out; for the full experience you've got to get the downloadable content (DLC). Though this model is partially a sneaky way for distributors and developers to increase revenue, these "microtransactions" can also significantly extend a game's shelf-life, something die-hard fans can applaud. Last winter's *Dragon's Age: Origins* was a great example, including characters at launch that functioned as in-game advertisements for DLC, but by continuing to release large add-ons like *Dragon Age: Origins — Awakening* throughout the year, gamers are still playing the title today. It's a thin line, but for now the rewards of microtransactions continue to outweigh the pains. **(Peter Galvin)**

Postapocalyptic madness went Sin City surreal in the addictive *Fallout: New Vegas*.

Take two CONT»

to the aforementioned download services. In general, these add-ons don't provide much in the way of bang-for-buck, though that may change with time. Nevertheless, in some cases, pertaining particularly to popular multiplayer first-person shooters, purchasing DLC is a prerequisite for participation.

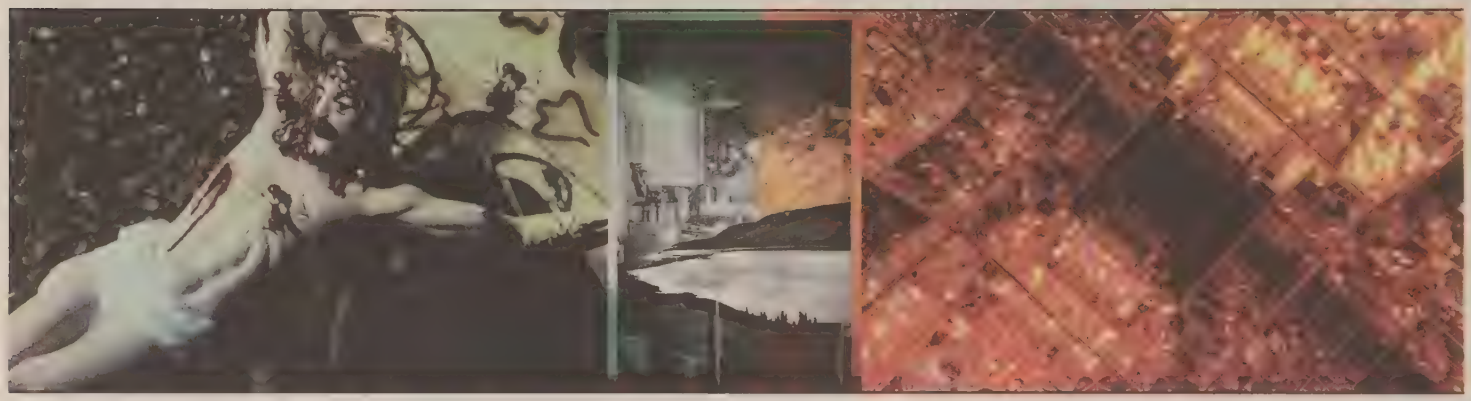
Even if you manage to scale your towering "to play" list, the release schedule simply refuses to cooperate. *Sid Meier's Civilization* is the game that made me the addict I am today, and when *Civilization V* was slated for a Sept. 21 release, I was ecstatic. But a round of *Civilization* takes about 10 hours, and *Dead Rising 2* lurked, hungry for brains, on the horizon, ready to hit store shelves the following week. Next to it, juggling a ball with a confident smirk, was *FIFA 11*, sharing the same release date. I didn't stand a chance. In the end, the strategy classic got shamefully short shrift.

Whatever guilt I felt at betraying my childhood obsession was assuaged by countless six-minute soccer showdowns and the corpses of exactly 2,129 zombies. Then, just at the time I was ready to consider diving back into *Civ*, (or at least to compose Mr. Meier an apologetic letter), *Fallout: New Vegas* ushered in Armageddon.

To date, I have invested nearly 50 hours of gleeful postnuclear role-playing. Despite this effort, there is much of the game I will probably never see. At a certain point, I had to move on, lest I get hopelessly behind. Thanks to the month of December — the annual industry doldrums — some catch up has been played, but not nearly enough. Two weeks from now, we'll have a new year. Five weeks from now, we'll have *Dead Space 2*, and the backlog will begin again. **(Ben Richardson)**

Late in 2010, the National Portrait Gallery's censorship of David Wojnarowicz's 1987 video *A Fire in My Belly* (left) ignited a firestorm of controversy. Here in San Francisco, visions were clear and wide-ranging, thanks to the likes of Matt Lipps (center) and Andy Diaz Hope (right).

DAVID WOJNAROWICZ, STILL FROM *A FIRE IN MY BELLY*, 1987; MATT LIPPS, DETAIL FROM *UNTITLED (STOVE)*, 2008; ANDY DIAZ HOPE, INTERIOR VIEW OF *INFINITE MORTAL: THE VOID*, 2010



Look forward in anger

By Matt Sussman
arts@sfbg.com

HAIRY EYEBALL/YEAR IN ART The year in art is ending on a note both sour and defiant. On Nov. 30, Smithsonian Secretary G. Wayne Clough, caving to criticism voiced by conservative politicians and religious groups, ordered the removal of David Wojnarowicz's 1987 video *A Fire in My Belly* from the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture." It was a cowardly decision; one that ultimately has undermined the credibility of Clough and his institution.

It's unfortunate that it took an act of censorship to get art — specifically, art by an openly gay artist responding to the darkest hours of the AIDS crisis — back into the national conversation, but the chorus of condemnation coming variously from journalists and critics, art museum associations, and even The New York Times editorial page, has helped to do just that.

Additionally, Wojnarowicz's piece, which was uploaded to Vimeo by his estate and New York's PPOW Gallery soon after it had been taken down in Washington, D.C., has undoubtedly been seen by more viewers in the past month than it had at the Smithsonian, or perhaps even in past installations (as of writing this column, the uploaded version has received more than 18,000 views).

This will probably continue to be the case as more galleries and museums across the country, in an impressive show of institutional solidarity, screen and/or install *A Fire In My Belly*. Locally, SF Camerawork and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts held screenings earlier this month. Southern Exposure will continue to show the piece through mid-February, and SFMOMA is scheduled to screen the full-length version of the video in early January.

While I agree with Modern Art Notes' Tyler Green that SFMOMA's commitment to screen *A Fire in My Belly* is "a turning point" in this whole debacle (New York's four biggest art museums have remained silent on the matter), I find his characterization of SFMOMA as "America's most conservative, play-it-safe modern-and-contemporary art museum" a bit harsh. Certainly, this year's recently revealed SECA winners — three of whom, it must be noted, have been past Goldie recipients, including 2010 winner Ruth Laskey — attest to the fact that, for every groaner of an exhibit ("How Wine Became Modern," anyone?), SFMOMA is also committed to supporting artists whose work cannot be dismissed as "play-it-safe." For starters, the memory drawings of Colter Jacobson, one of this year's SECA winners, certainly fall along the continuum of queer portraiture displayed in "Hide/Seek."

This is not to encourage wishful thinking. While it's hard to imagine a San Francisco art institution doing something along the lines of the Smithsonian, I don't think anyone expected a reignition of decades-old culture wars, let alone in the very city where the Corcoran Gallery infamously canceled a Robert Mapplethorpe exhibit in 1989. The shorter our cultural memory, it seems, the greater is our propensity to repeat the lowest moments of our history.

So, over the past few weeks, I've been going over the works, exhibits, and events that I was thrilled did happen here, all glorious reclamations of our Convention and Visitors Bureau's tagline, "Only in San Francisco." Here is an in no way complete rundown of some of the art I didn't cover in this column for a variety of reasons (scheduling conflicts, in-the-moment preference, critical laxity), save for the works themselves.

L@TE, BERKELEY ART MUSEUM, MOST FRIDAY NIGHTS
Turning staid-by-day museums into hip nightspots for hip young folks has been the hip thing for institutions to do for some time now. Thankfully, the Berkeley Art Museum knows how to do it right. Skip the catered canapés and light show, and focus on programming that is truly varied and more often than not, locally-minded — from Terry Riley celebrating his 75th to Xiu Xiu frontman Jamie Stewart improvising film soundtracks, from performance artist Kalup Linzy singing dirty love songs to outré Mexican B cinema— all for next to nothing.

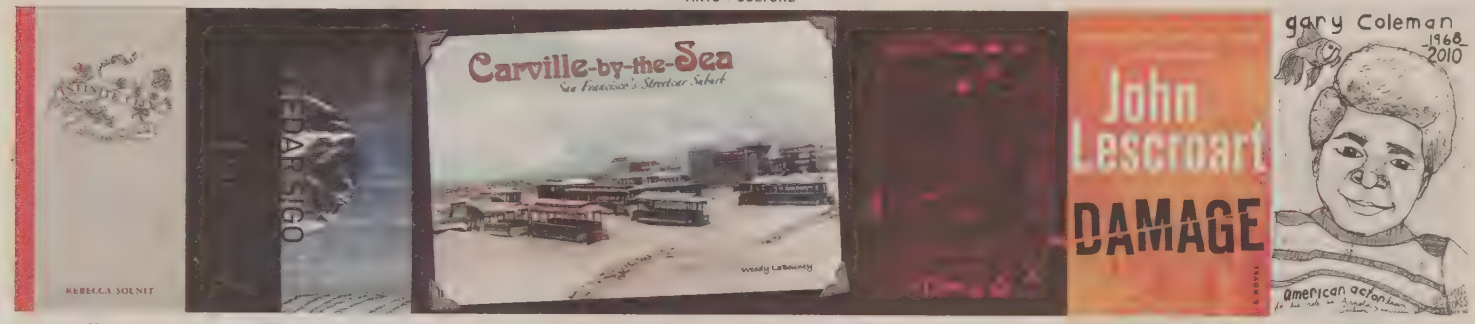
CARINA BAUMANN, *UNTITLED (2)* (2008-09), 2ND FLOOR PROJECTS, JAN.-FEB.
At first I couldn't see the woman's face in Carina Baumann's *Untitled (2)*. I stared into the slate-like surface (actually, translucent white film developed on aluminum), incrementally adjusting my height, until the blackness stared back. The effect was not one of shock, as with the mirrors at the end of Disney's Haunted Mansion ride, in which the holographic undead crowd in with your reflection. Baumann's art asks for patience and slow adjustment, and in return, regifts your sense of sight.

"SUGGESTIONS OF A LIFE BEING LIVED," SF CAMERAWORK, SEPT.-OCT.
Perhaps most germane to the issues about queerness, identity politics, and representation now being raised (again) by Wojnarowicz-gate and the "Hide/Seek" exhibit, this group show put together by Chicago-based curator Danny Orendorff and SF native Adrienne Skye Roberts took "queerness" out into the desert, helped it cast off the much-tattered coat of identity politics, and asked a group of artists, activists, and filmmakers to record its unfettered visions of things to come (many of which, as the resulting work testified to, are being lived out right now).

MATT LIPPS, "HOME," SILVERMAN GALLERY, APRIL-JUNE; R.H. QUAYTMAN, "NEW WORK," SFMOMA, THROUGH JAN. 16, 2011
Although Matt Lipps is a photographer and R.H. Quaytman is a painter, they tweak their respective mediums in these unrelated shows to arrive at a similar kind of flat sculpture, which flickers between abstract prettiness and representational heavy-lifting. Lipps' densely layered photographs of assemblages — in which variously colored photographs of domestic interiors, cut into facets and taped back together to form the original image, become backdrops for cut-out reproductions of Ansel Adams landscapes — collapse foreground and background, personal space and photographic history. Quaytman, working in dialogue with the poetry of Jack Spicer and SFMOMA's photo archive, silk-screens images from the museum's holdings onto beveled, wooden panels of various sizes, augmenting them with flashes of Easter eggs-like color and glittering crushed glass.

ERIK SCOLLON, "THE URGE," ROMER YOUNG (FORMERLY PING PONG), JULY-AUG.
Although nothing will top his porcelain casts of assholes that littered Ping Pong Gallery like so many discarded sand dollars for the 2009 group show "Live and Direct," Eric Scollon's more recent solo exhibit at the gallery, "The Urge," continued to queer form and function. The 50 or so small porcelain works, painted in the blue and white style of Dutch Delftware and arranged in pun-laden groupings, smartly played off ceramics' dual cultural status as both a "fine art" and kitsch object, while throwing shade at modern art's conflicted relationship to ornament. Speaking of which, if only I had a Scollon for my tree.

ANDY DIAZ HOPE, "INFINITE MORTAL," CATHARINE CLARK GALLERY, THROUGH JAN. 1, 2011
Diaz Hope's dazzling sculptures owe as much to his engineering background as to, as he puts it in an e-mail, a "revisiting of childhood thoughts about mortality and infinity." Their mirrored, crystalline exteriors yell "Gaga!" but once immersed in their kaleidoscopic guts, they are, much like Yayoi Kusama's infinity boxes, meditation chambers built from carnival ride components. Simply beautiful stuff. SFBG



Paging all readers: This year, Bay Area lit included acclaimed books by Rebecca Solnit and Cedar Sigo, a unique look at Carville-by-the-Sea, roving poetry, lurid true crime, and a collection of memorial portraits.

COVERS OF *INFINITE CITY, STRANGER IN TOWN, CARVILLE-BY THE-SEA, EL GOLPE CHILENO, DAMAGE*; PORTRAIT OF GARY COLEMAN FROM *HERE NOW FROM EVERYWHERE*

Page street

A small assortment of Bay Area book highlights from 2010

LIT Rebecca Solnit's *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (University of California Press, 158 pages, $24.95) is one of the best ideas a writer has come up with in a long time. By combining private and public support, Solnit was able to give away portions of the atlas in full-color, full-spread map handouts. (My favorite tracked both famous/infamous queer public spaces and the migration of butterflies throughout the city.). In the process, she also gave lectures in public spaces, providing a public service in the name of history and inclusion before dropping this tome on the book-buying masses. Gent Sturgeon's version of a city-fied Rorschach alone is worth the price of the ticket. From insect habitats to serial killers, Zen Buddhist centers to the culture wars of the Fillmore and South of Market that some call redevelopment; Solnit and her cadre of artists, writers, cartographers, and researchers — Chris Carlsson, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, and Mona Caron among them — give us the infinite depths and limitless potential that can be found in 49 square miles. **(D. Scot Miller)**

A lot of good and even great books came from the Bay Area this year, but one stands out: a book of poetry, Cedar Sigo's *Stranger in Town* (City Lights, 100 pages, $13.95). He is a young writer who improves dramatically each time I hear him read, and his poetry and critical writing are among the wonders of our age. And of the age before, since through him speak the dead poets David Rattray, John Wieners, Robert Creeley, Denton Welch, Philip Whalen, Salvador Dali, Jean Cocteau, Eartha Kitt, Raymond Roussel, Lorine Niedecker, and Cole Porter. When new writers come to San Francisco, they ask me if I've met Cedar Sigo. If they don't know Sigo's work, then I hand them a copy of the new collection. Don't have to say much, I just step back a little to avoid the stars and diamonds and apples popping out of their eyes like toast from a toaster, because this crazy work is that crazy good. **(Kevin Killian)**

Compared with the prosaic grind of the inner city, the Sunset can seem like a — albeit foggy — vacation. Wide streets, surf breaks, dunes fit to get lost in: the neighborhood is just right for an offbeat bohemian getaway. But maybe those are just the reverberations of the past, which western neighborhood historian Woody LaBounty has dug up in *Carville-by-the-Sea* (Outside Lands Media, 144 pages, $35). This coffee table book illustrates the lives of the Sunset's first modern-day inhabitants, who constructed a seaside village of retired street cars to inhabit back in the days before the N-Judah. Colorized at times for an Oz-like effect, the photos LaBounty digs up to illustrate "Cartown" reveal a community of artists, families, and enthusiasts — even a women's cycling club — amid an untamed, oscillating sandscape. Those converted SoMa warehouse apartments suddenly don't seem quite so rugged, do they now? **(Caitlin Donohue)**

In a city that boasts literally hundreds of theatrical world premieres per year, it's astounding how few make it to the printed page. Bravo, then, to EXIT Press, new publishing arm of the venerable EXIT Theatre, for helping to ensure that at least some of our local play-writing talents will be preserved for posterity. And who better to inaugurate the series than Mark Jackson, whose professional development has been closely tied to the EXIT, and to the San Francisco Fringe Festival, which it produces? Far from being merely a collection of "Fringe-y" experimentation, *Ten Plays* (EXIT Press, 492 pages, $19.95) is a testament to the tenacity of vision. From reimagined Shakespearean classics (*R&J, I Am Hamlet)* to Jackson's breakout hit *The Death of Meyerhold*, the bleakly comedic *American $uicide*, and the stirring Kurosawa-esque epic *The Forest War*, what these plays have in common is an audacious commitment to the illimitable possibilities of live theater. Of which, giving these works an opportunity to reach a wider audience is but one. **(Nicole Gluckstern)**

By any good political standard, John Lescroart's *Damage* (Dutton, 416 pages, $26.95) is awful. It's all about how a criminal uses the technicalities of law to get released (damn liberal judges) and how his family — newspaper publishers with ties to the (damn liberal) political establishment — protects him even as he continues to rape young women. Reminds me of that atrocious movie *Pacific Heights*, which is supposed to convince you that eviction protection and tenants rights are unfair to the poor landlords. But Lescroart writes about San Francisco, and does a pretty good job describing the city, and his characters are so real and well-crafted that I'm able to set aside the politics. In this case, Ro Curtlee, the rapist, is such an evil, evil bad guy — but a plausible, privileged evil bad guy — that he comes to life in a way that makes you want to kill him yourself. And makes you understand why a cop might feel the same way. And in the world of crime fiction, making you feel pain is half the game. It'll be out in paper this spring. **(Tim Redmond)** What Carl Rakosi was to Objectivism — a significant poet who dropped out of sight only to reemerge an old master — Richard O. Moore is to the SF Renaissance. The 90-year-old Moore was active in Kenneth Rexroth's libertarian-anarchist circle in the 1940s, but abandoned poetry publishing for the more efficacious mass media of radio and TV, cofounding both KPFA and KQED in the process (and shooting the only footage of Frank O'Hara to boot). But Moore never stopped writing, and his debut volume *Writing the Silences* (University of California Press, $19.95) offers a brief but tantalizing introduction to more than 60 years of poetic activity. Moore's diction is spare but memorable; a hawk's wings, for example, "balance on the blind/ push of air." Yet his low-key tones are wedded to an experimental sensibility; witness 1960's "Ten Philosophical Asides," which might be the first poem in English riffing on Wittgenstein, more than a decade before language poetry. *Writing the Silences* is thus belated yet ahead of its time. **(Garrett Caples)**

I commissioned three of the works in Veronica De Jesus's *Here Now From Everywhere* (Allone Co. Editions, 130 pages, $26). Her portraits of Michael Jackson and Jay Reatard ran in the Guardian, while I paid out of pocket for her to render a tribute to the poet John Wieners for my boyfriend. Along with just-announced SECA Award winner Colter Jacobsen, who published this book, De Jesus is my favorite creator of drawings in the Bay Area. Like Jacobsen, she delves into memory — her memorial portraits can be seen for free on the windows of Dog Eared Books, where this book is for sale. The charm and value of *Here Now From Everywhere* is immediate, but the book reveals more of its multfaceted personality with each return visit. De Jesus' illustrated dictionary of inspirational icons ranges from superstars to half-forgotten pop heroes, from cultural figures to obscure female athletes. It's a gift. **(Johnny Ray Huston)**

"I told Micah last night that my new book would be a haunted house." Berkeley-based poet Julian Poirier's *El Golpe Chileño* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 128 pages, $15) is filled with the ghosts of past and present. Essentially a bildungsroman, it tracks Poirier's protagonist's growth from youthful journeyman into adulthood though a kind of mixed-genre Theatre of the Absurd. Vaudeville, comics, memoir, film pitch, epistolary, failed novel, poetry, the carnival, and travelogue are all wielded brilliantly in the hands of Poirier, making for a phantasmagoric reading experience where the whole emerges defiantly greater than the sum of its parts. Poirier writes, "I turned my whole brain into a city and wrote down everything I saw happening there." And indeed it certainly feels that way — the book is ripe with the names of places, of friends living and dead; with lists of dates and years; and with drawings and photographs, making up what Poirier somewhat obliquely labels "The Stolen Universe." *El Golpe Chileño* is truly a success of form and content, of the high and low, of pop and elegy. **(John Sakkis)**

How can you stay in the house?

Bay Area dance brought surprises — and great works both odd and traditional — in 2010

By Rita Felciano
arts@sfbg.com

Steps and leaps ahead: Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project (left) and Shantala Shivalingappa provides two of 2010's highlights in Bay Area dance. | ERIKA CHONG SHUCH PHOTO BY PAK HAN

YEAR IN DANCE Watching dance in the Bay Area is a privilege. With the constant influx of eager young talents, people who stick around and develop, and established artists who still manage to surprise year after year, the experience can be a ball. This celebration is boosted by the "travelers" from other cities and countries who come in for a day or two and keep local dance from becoming overly self-satisfied. There is a lot wrong with capitalism, but competition — in terms of ideas — can be a real quality booster.

Watching dance in the Bay Area can also be a chore. Performances bunch up on each other, making it difficult to schedule which shows to attend. No one seems to perform on Easter or Memorial Day, but everyone goes crazy on the adjacent weekends. What is this — do we all go to church on Easter or to the beach on Memorial Day? Kudos to the West Wave Dance Festival, which this year moved its schedule to Monday nights.

One consequence of the plethora of dance available all year round is my editor's annual request for a retrospective of the past 12 months. It's a useful exercise, I suppose, though I have yet to decide whether it's a privilege or a chore. Here are a dozen highlights that rose to the surface.

1. I call them *surprisers*, because you think you know what to expect from them and then find out that you don't. One example is long-term dancer Kara Davis. She's unafraid to use large ensembles in increasingly complex choreography. Another is Katie Faulkner, who possesses wit in addition to a fine eye for form. Jazz choreographer Reginald Ray Savage took Stravinsky's *Agon* and used it to choreograph for his tiny group. I still don't know whether the result works, but it was great to see him daring to take on a ballet icon. Rajendra Serber and Stephany Auberville's *Dance for the Flies* was an hour-long improvisation that thrilled, thanks to the dancers' intensity and the contributions of equally good musicians Matt Davignon and Cheryl Leonard.

2. San Francisco Ballet. Helgi Tomasson is committed to stretching our notions about ballet. So he programmed John Neumeier's visually stunning though choreographically problematic *The Mermaid*. Was the risk worth taking? Perhaps. SFB artists who still dance in my head: Sarah Van Patten as Juliet; Maria Kochetkova in Yuri Possokov's *Classical Symphony*; Damian Smith in everything he touched; and Pascal Molat as Petrouchka.

3. Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project's *Love Everywhere* in the City Hall rotunda on Valentine's Day. Professional and community performers, plus a chamber ensemble, celebrated people's commitment to each other in a work that was funny, humorous, and ever so gentle. It humanized the seat of power.

4. Lines Ballet. By now we may know choreographer Alonzo King's choreographic language, yet he finds wondrous new ways to use it. For the gorgeous *Wheel in the Middle of the Field*, he interpreted European classical songs, putting the singers on stage with the dancers. With Zakir Hussein, he rethought both the music and the tale of *Scheherazade*.

5. In its reprise this year, Joe Goode Performance Group's mesmerizing *Traveling Light* proved to be one of Goode's most worthwhile journey

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CURTAIN CALLS: THIS WAS A YEAR OF MAGICAL KEEPING-IT-REALISM ON BAY AREA STAGES

THEATER Freud called dreams wish fulfillment; or reality, disguised, but basically as we'd like it to be. If you asked the Buddha and Heisenberg about reality, you'd get pretty much the same answer. Not that any of these guys went to the theater a lot in 2010. This year oscillated between quasi-documentary fidelity to facts and burrowing hallucinations like those induced by Gysin and Sommerville's spinning stroboscopic Dreamachine. (A facsimile of one even graced *The Burroughs and Kookie Show*, Christopher Kuckenbaker's Fringe Festival winner and definitely a peak stage encounter in 2010.) But it all amounted to an assault of some kind on the sleepwalking world outside. Dreaming in the theater can be much more lucid.

Best political theater riffs: *In the Wake* (Berkeley Rep) was not a perfect play, but Lisa Kron's slightly lopsided new political dramedy had a way of upsetting some fundamental and suspect assumptions of mainstream liberals that was at times electrifying. Dan Hoyle's *The Real Americans*, while not as politically provocative, also ventured outside the "liberal bubble" into red state territory, bringing back reportage in the form of deft rapid-fire characterizations, comedy, and music by the young but prodigious solo performer–playwright of *Tings Dey Happen* and *Circumnavigator*. And finally, the 51-year-old San Francisco Mime Troupe's reaffirmed that its brand of agitprop is still a going concern. *Posibilidad, or the Death of the Worker*, set partly in the USA but inspired by the recent factory takeovers by workers in Argentina, was a shrewd, funny, tuneful plea for cooperatives against the grinning, co-opting tendencies of "capitalism with a human face."

The most hyped production: Terrell Alvin McCraney's trilogy, *The Brother/Sister Plays*. The only one that really worked for me was the second, *The Brothers Size*, which got a very strong production at the Magic under Octavio Solis. It was lean, focused, a small story with subtle, far-reaching reverberations. The other two plays reached consciously for the grandiose without finally grasping much. Nevertheless, the precedent-setting coordination between the Magic, Marin Theatre Company, and American Conservatory Theater in introducing these plays to the Bay Area was an exciting development.

Boldest venture: Berkeley Rep's London import, *Afghanistan: The Great Game*, a seven-hour marathon of short scripts by 12 playwrights on the history and politics of this current critical object of U.S. imperial desire. A mixed bag theatrically, though impressively produced, but the historical perspective — boiling down to a dismal pattern of imperial design and hubris, infamy, and failure — was a point well taken. Indeed, the antiwar protest outside the White House on Dec. 16, where 131 arrests were made ahead of President Obama's declaration of "progress" in Afghanistan, seemed its logical conclusion.

Best solo performances behind a large desk: Paul Gerrior in *Krapp's Last Tape* (Cutting Ball); Joel Israel in *Reluctant* (Brava).

Best Pas de Donut: Howard Swain and Lance Gardner in *Superior Donuts* at TheatreWorks.

Best mise-en-scène as meaningful, mindful mess: *This Is All I Need* by Mugwumpin.

Best visiting productions: Japan's Zenshinza Theatre Company at Zellerbach (Cal Performances); *West Side Story* at the Orpheum; *Jane Austen Unscripted* at BATS' Bayfront Theater.

Best indefinable night in a theater: Dan

CONTINUES ON PAGE 26 »

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Year in dance CONT»

in every way. Inspired by the Old Mint's history and architecture, his company of seven and 15 additional dancers evoked 19th century ordinary folks, all of them recognizable.

6. Kuchipudi is one of the lesser-known classical Indian dance forms. It's even more of a pity that Shantala Shivalingappa, a dancer of rare refinement and virtuosity, showed her *Gamaka* for one night only. Part of this evening's appeal came from the ease and joy that she and her musicians brought to the performance.

7. In October, Zaccho Dance Theatre's noble *Sailing Away* commemorated the exodus from San Francisco in 1858 of a whole segment of the African American community. When it was performed on Market Street, the contrast between the everyday crowd and the dignity and steely focus of the traveling performers (Anna Tabor-Smith and Antoine Hunter) created a high drama of its own.

8. If anybody still needed to be convinced, *Socrates* confirmed that the Mark Morris Dance Group is the finest modern dance company in the country. Based on Eric Satie's astounding score, Morris luminously quiet meditation on death wove a spell that has yet to evaporate.

9. Ralph Lemon's *How Can You Stay in the House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?* drew me in because of the many balls — formal questions about tonal nuances; juxtapositions of material; deeply-felt thematic concerns — that he had to keep afloat. He did so brilliantly. It was lovely to see — a major accomplishment by a gifted artist-thinker.

10. Carole Zertuche, artistic director of Theatre Flamenco of San Francisco, has reoriented flamenco to where it belongs: the soloist. For "Una Noche Flamenco," the company's 44th season, she invited dancers Manuel Gutierrez, Juan Siddi, and Cristina Hall, whose takes on flamenco could not be more different. They joined Zertuche and a group of equally strong, individualized singers and instrumentalists for an exceptionally well-balanced evening of powerfully performed dance.

11. This year also brought the inaugural — and much-needed — San Francisco Dance Film Festival. Greta Schoenberg assembled an impressive program of locally-made and imported works. The sheer number of perspectives that these dance/film artists brought to their work was inspiring. Good news: the festival returns March 25-27, 2011.

12. The collaboration between AXIS Dance Company and inkboat resulted in *Odd* — a work that was anything but odd. It was exquisite, fragile, and wispy. Taking his cue from Norwegian painter Odd Nordrum, choreographer Shinichi Iova-Koga worked with two groups of nontraditionally trained dancers. The result was a stunner. May it have a long and healthy life. SFBG

CURTAIN CALLS:
THIS WAS A YEAR OF MAGICAL KEEPING-IT-REALISM ON BAY AREA STAGES

CONT»

Carbone at the Dark Room.

Best experiential fare: *Etiquette* by London's Rotozaza (hosted by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts at the Samovar Tea Lounge).

Best extraterrestrial fare: Cynthia Hopkins' *The Success of Failure (or, The Failure of Success)* at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Best all-around design: *The Tempest* at Cutting Ball.

Best productions with death references in the title: *Don't Feel: The Death of Dahmer* by writer-performer Evan Johnson; and *when i die, i will be dead*, a pair of dance/theater pieces by Alicia Ohs. Both *Don't Feel* and *when i die* were nurtured and staged at the now-shuttered queer performance incubator Mama Calizo's Voice Factory. Until some hoped-for resurrection, R.I.P. Mama Calizo's.

Best (deconstruction of) Shakespeare: *Juliet*, directed by Mark Jackson at San Francisco State.

Best Bill Murray: Jody Frandle in *Caddyshack Live!* at the Dark Room.

Best debut by a new company: Symmetry Theatre with *Show and Tell* at the Thick House.

Best ensemble casts in a comedy: *Learn to Be Latina* (Impact Theatre); Shotgun Players' production of *The Norman Conquests* (with a special nod to Richard Reinholdt in the title role); *Man of Rock* (Climate Theater); *Scapin* (ACT).

Best ensemble cast in a drama: Aurora Theatre Company's *Trouble in Mind* (with a special nod to Margo Hall).

Best non-singing lead in a comic opera: Patrick Michael Dukeman in *Jerry Springer, the Opera* (Ray of Light Theatre). **(Robert Avila)**

A story that really didn't need to be told: Johnny (Stephen Dorff, left, with Elle Fanning) struggles with the meaning of life in *Somewhere*. | PHOTO BY MERRICK MORTON

In a lonely place

Dorff attempts depth in Coppola's tame *Somewhere*

By Cheryl Eddy
cheryl@sfbg.com

FILM A lonely Ferrari zooms around a deserted track, over and over and over again. The opening scene of Sofia Coppola's latest, *Somewhere*, is such an obvious metaphor that at first I thought the director was joking. Actually, she's not: *Somewhere* is indeed a repetitious movie about a very boring, very ennui-laden individual, who happens to be a movie star with the marquee-ready name of Johnny Marco (Stephen Dorff).

Now that you've been smacked over the head with metaphor, feel free to play spot the subtext: Johnny lives at Sunset Boulevard haunt the Chateau Marmont, legendary for its often-behaving-badly celebrity clientele. His life is an endless progression of blah (wake up, smoke, pop a Propecia, eyefuck and fuck random female admirers), broken up by job obligations — the tedium of a press conference here, the drudgery of a visit to the special-effects makeup studio there. *Sigh.*

Sorta like Bill Murray's actor character in Coppola's 2003 *Lost in Translation*, Johnny's fame is approximately equal to Dorff's. He's had a steady career for the past 20-something years, with occasional high points (1998's *Blade*, 2000's *Cecil B. DeMented*) and interesting parts in smaller films (1996's *I Shot Andy Warhol*), but nothing that elevated him to the A list. Mostly he's known for appearing in throwaway titles and dating the likes of Pamela Anderson. One might be forgiven for assuming his home life quite resembles the bad boy he plays in Britney Spears' "Everytime" video.

One might now suspect his home life resembles *Somewhere*. Can't you imagine onetime hottie Dorff, well past scruffy and nearing haggard, hiring twin pole dancers to writhe along with Foo Fighters songs as he gazes on, barely registering amusement or a pulse? Coppola's casting of Dorff is either totally inspired or totally lazy. We don't know enough about the real guy, who is playing an actor much like himself, to know if he's acting or not. Frankly, he's such a blank, shallow canvas it's hard to spend too much time wondering or caring.

Here's another instance of subtext: would any director not as privileged as Coppola dare to focus on a character whose massive wealth can't at all assuage his existential crisis? Money may not buy happiness, but it's kind of hard to feel sorry for a guy whose depression plays out as he floats the day away at a luxury hotel. The pissy, anonymous text messages Johnny receives throughout the film ("Why are you such a fucking asshole?") are either sent directly from his subconscious, or are a knowing nod to the feelings of the unwashed masses who spent all of *Translation* wishing evil on poor little rich girl Scarlett Johansson.

Fortunately, there is a bright spot in all this. Obviously *Somewhere* is Coppola's "I have kids now and therefore will preach about the magical joys of parenting" film. Ergo, mostly-absentee dad Johnny has a kid, Cleo, a tween sprite played by the charming Elle Fanning. Cleo's pretty blasé about the whole movie-star thing, but she is allowed a delighted squeal when she gets a peek at the swank-tastic hotel suite the pair is given during a promotional trip to Milan. She is the only meaningful thing in Johnny's life, and the only interesting thing that happens in this glacially-paced, bellybutton-obsessed movie.

But, you say, *Somewhere* won the Venice Film Festival's Golden Lion (due to the film's Italy scenes and Coppola's Coppola-ness, perhaps?). Surely it must have some merit beyond Fanning and the middling, voyeuristic pleasures of seeing exactly what a movie star does on his free time? Divergent tones and motives aside, *Somewhere* isn't that far from Joaquin Phoenix's agonizing faux-doc *I'm Still Here*. Neither place is any place I'd like to visit again. SFBG

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[illegible]	BOXING DAY with DJ Mahoooney
MON Dec 27 10pm, Free	PUNK ROCK SIDESHOW w/DJ Tragic & Duchess of Nazard
TUE Dec 28 9pm, $5	HOLLOW EARTH Iron Witch, Vanishing Breed
WED Dec 29 8:30pm, sliding scale donation (or bring canned food)	SF FOOD BANK BENEFIT with Persephone's Bees Marx & the Casuals Virgil Shaw w/Peacock Gap and the Wagoneers
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Scrooge you can use

A guide to ignoring Christmas

By Caitlin Donohue
caitlin@sfbg.com

CULTURE/ALT-XMAS At some point this December, my holiday spirit failed to launch. It's strange in a way — I love gluttony, formal wear, time with loved ones, and the Latino church procession I saw going down South Van Ness Avenue the other day gave me a little shiver of happiness (not to mention the purple lights bedecking kink.com's Armory). But I just don't want to do the tree, the presents, the pressure. Really, this list of Xmas week alternative activities is for me as much as anyone, which I hope means I still get to do the mistletoe thing.

OPTION ONE: HEAD FOR THE HILLS

You ain't got shit to do, so why not take your melancholy and foist it on nature? The recent spate of rain may make for a wet winter wonderland, but that should suit misanthropes just fine. Wear your best raincoat and mittens and you'll be snug as the baby JC in his manger.

Where to go? The No. 76 Muni bus can get you to the Marin Headlands Recreational Area (remember, the buses run on the holiday-Sunday schedule on the 25th , check www.511.org for times) where foul weather makes for thrilling, wind-whipping hikes about the hills to the north of Golden Gate Bridge. Or you can take advantage of the greenery within city limits. Glen Canyon Park's many trails are an excellent place to wait out the tinsel and treacle, as are the startlingly beautiful red rocks jutting out over the city in Corona Heights Park and the idiosyncratic bison paddock in Golden Gate Park.

Bonus round: get your conservation on the day after Christmas in Muir Woods with a free hike called "Get Your Spawn On: Searching for Endangered Salmon." The hike will take you on a hunt for salmonids and reveals how we can help the fishies swim their way back into species security. (Meets at Muir Woods Dipsea Trail Trailhead, Mill Valley. (415) 349-5787, www.wildequity.org. 10 a.m.–noon, free with $5 park entrance fee)

OPTION TWO: GET A LITTLE CULTCHA IN YA

Sure, many of our venerable cultural institutions stay away from organizing events over the holiday weekend. But with only a small amount of searching, you can dig up the brave souls who see no reason to halt their arty trot on account of jingle bells. These include Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, which will be celebrating Dec. 24 with part one of its two-part exhibition "Audience as Subject," a multimedia exploration of crowd behavior. Filmmaker Stefan Constantinescu will screen *Troleibuzul 92* (2009), an examination of reactions to a planted actor on a crowded bus making abusive phone calls to his "girlfriend," and visual and video artists investigate variations on the theme. (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission, SF; (415) 978-2700, www.ybca.org. Noon, $7.)

If self scrutiny's not your jam, head to the Contemporary Jewish Museum on Christmas Day, where free admission all day means that you can save your bones for New Year Eve's and still check out the work of H.A. Rey and Margret Rey, the husband and wife who created Curious George. The couple just barely managed to smuggle the early sketches of George (and themselves) in their escape from the Nazi invasion of Paris, which they accomplished by bicycle. The drama might explain George's penchant for close calls and saving the day. Kind of makes that cycling slog through this week's foul weather seem less onerous, no? (Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission, SF; (415) 655-7800, www.thecjm.org. Open 11 a.m.-5 p.m.)

OPTION THREE: GET IT ON FILM

Going to the movies on Christmas has long been the treasured territory of awkward family gatherings, and with the mega-release of *Tron: Legacy* (playing at various Bay Area theaters) you can take it to the third dimension! Why talk about each others' lives when you can plop down in the Castro Theatre with a tub of popcorn, affix 3-D glasses to your face and zone ... out ... for two hours and seven minutes? Hell, you can even skip the fam-fam and bring your girl Mary Jane, because this is one flick that promises to look real cool with a side of herb — soundtrack, acting, and plot notwithstanding.

And there's no need to be a lonely anime geek by the Christmas tree. Bebop Nights, the recurring get-together of cult classic TV show *Cowboy Bebop* fans is holding its sixth installment Dec. 25, a day stereotypically characterized by animated features with way, way less cooler characters. Sure, Rudolph and Frosty are bulbous and ebullient, but Spike, Vicious, and Julie are deep space bounty hunters with a penchant for dope background music. Which cast better characterizes your lump of coal attitude this yuletide? (Bridge Theatre, 3010 Geary, SF; (415) 668-6384, www.landmarktheaters.com. Midnight–3 a.m., suggested donation $4)

Other promising showings include Natalie Portman's psycho-ballet thriller, *Black Swan*, camp of the year *Burlesque*, the Coen brothers' remake of the western *True Grit*, and Naomi Watts as CIA agent Valerie Plame in *Fair Game*.

OPTION FOUR: DRINK

And when all else fails, raise a glass to (and of, see how that works?) booze. Many of your watering hole favorites will be open Christmas Eve and day, but why not try on a new barstool and pack of regulars for size? My pick for caroling into the bottom of your glass is Trad'r Sam (6150 Geary, SF; (415) 221-0733. Open noon–late), a kick-ass Outer Richmond tiki bar where I am cautioned that a solo scorpion bowl mission will result in the ability to see reindeers, unless that's what you're going for. To make your Christmas denial complete, keep one eye on the jukebox, and your clobbering stick handy for any poor schlub who opts for Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas." SFBG

Evade Santa's judgment with (left) free admission day at the Jewish Contemporary Museum, now exhibiting the original Curious George illustrations or (right) an infotaining trek through the salmon streams of Muir Woods. | CURIOUS GEORGE ILLUSTRATION BY H.A. REY; SALMON PHOTO COURTESY OF WILD EQUITY INSTITUTE

Classic rock

Daniel Heath and Ken Flagg combine restorations in the glorious *Man of Rock*

By Robert Avila
arts@sfbg,com

THEATER Only the barbarity of these dark dumb days could make someone nostalgic for the Reagan era. A simpler time? Not for most — hairstylists maybe least of all. But in *The Man of Rock*, New Jersey in 1986 appears mercifully devoid of economic mayhem, quasi-fascist politics, or the doom-shrouded future they portend, which is probably why this lively new music-blasted comedy can rock so well. Heavy metal, yes; heavy going, no.

At the same time, Bay Area playwright Daniel Heath (of *Forking* fame) shrewdly draws here on George Etherege's 1676 Restoration comedy, *The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter*, for a sweet and saucy adaptation that ensures there are brains, too, under all the big hair. One could almost call *The Man of Rock* (featuring spot-on original music by Ken Flagg) the thinking person's *Rock of Ages*.

In Heath and director Jessica Heidt's sure, evocative transplantation, Etherege's witty aristocratic rake, Dorimant, becomes a one-hit rocker and multihit lady-killer operating a live-music bar on the trashy tourist boardwalks of the Jersey Shore. Perennially short of rent, Dorimant (played by a smooth Adam Yazbeck) gets a tip from his weary landlady (Arwen Anderson, in the first of several deft turns) about the arrival of a rich, eligible young Connecticut princess, Antoinette (Anderson again), also known as Toni, summering at the shore under the watchful eye of her cheerfully high-strung, busybody mother (a sharp and funny Danielle Levin, in one of several distinct roles).

Never mind that Dorimant already has a girlfriend, singer Suzie Love (a winningly earthy Michelle Maxson), or that he's working on throwing her over for her best friend, the smart but smitten Missy (a somber, soulful Levin): Dorimant loves only Dorimant.

Until he meets Toni, of course. Then sparks fly in all directions. The brainy, initially icy Toni, for her part, is slower to savor the comical suave of her rock-star suitor. Yazbeck delivers cocksure rogue Dorimant with laid-back cool and a convincing glam-rock literary pretentiousness that is the play's single overt nod to the lilting language of the original text, while nimbly aligning it with an utterly distinct era. "Your ship of conjecture has left the feeble harbor of your facts," he tells a suspicious Suzie at one point. It's a ridiculous phrase, yet Dorimant can get away with it, even amid the more off-the-rack working-class accents and preppy inflections of those around him. At the same time, a good part of the fun between Dorimant and Toni is the latter's ruthless ability to mock this verbal frippery.

Hair yesterday: Jersey Shore lothario Dorimant (Adam Yazbeck) is flanked by Reagan-era peers and rivals in *The Man of Rock*.

Meanwhile, Suzie smells a rat, Missy wallows in lovelorn guilt, and Dorimant's fellow musicians — assembled under the choice name Silverwolf (bassist Chadd Ciccarelli, guitarist Joshua Hertel, and keyboardist Dane Johnson, backed on drums by an able and charismatic Lance Gardner in another of the production's outstanding multirole performances) — cast disapproving glances in his direction.

A couple more significant subplots unfurl as well, the first having to do with the fact that Toni is not as well off as she appears, and her mother is therefore desperate to see her married to eligible childhood chum Harry Bellair (a smart, effortlessly charming Patrick Alparone), son of a wealthy businessman (a hilariously loud, cigar-chomping Gardner), but also secretly gay. Then there's the arrival of a new band on the scene, Hämmer (conjured by the same backing musicians in different wigs), complete with umlauts and a lead singer named J.J. Rock — a balls-out, over-the-top fop played with sock-puppet falsetto but real panache by Alparone. The cast as a whole convincingly sells the rock numbers scattered throughout the play with a combination of respectable, even exceptional musical ability and pitch-perfect histrionics.

Naturally, everything resolves on the tonic, which is to say on a happy note. And if that's not reality, it's not noise pollution either. SFBG

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Put 'em up: a young pugilist tests his might in *Boxing Gym*.

Fight club

Master documentarian Frederick Wiseman turns to the sweet science

By Max Goldberg
arts@sfbg.com

FILM Late in *Boxing Gym*, a pungent documentary even for Frederick Wiseman, an old-timer says something wise to his friend while lacing up. The friend doesn't see the point of analogies. Our man admits that some only work on an intellectual level, but insists that others make intuitive sense of abstraction — the right metaphor can make all the difference in getting a particular movement. It's hard to imagine that Wiseman would still be making his films if he didn't think the same held true for a motion picture sequence.

Good thing, since boxing has been made to shoulder an awful lot of Hollywood hooey. Not much has changed since Manny Farber, writing in 1949, decried fight pictures for being "tightly humorless and supersaturated with worn-out morality ... pure fantasy in so far as capturing the pulse of the beak-busting trade." Wiseman isn't interested in the trade so much as the discipline — though the big time's spectacular images are plastered around the old-school Texas club. And yet even if *Boxing Gym* shrugs at the competitive elements of the sport, Wiseman's squat compositions tune in the unglamorous business of keeping your dukes up when tired — the kind of matter-of-fact physical truth professional actors howl for.

By releasing *Boxing Gym* immediately after *La Danse* (2009), Wiseman ensures his own comparisons. The choreographer-dancer and trainer-boxer tandems are aligned not only in fancy footwork (Wiseman's too), but also in their mirror-stretched studios. There are differences, of course — one can't help but think of the Paris Ballet's fundraising efforts when Richard Lord, the dexterous trainer-manager of the gym, explains membership dues. Perhaps because Wiseman is not beholden to an institutional cycle of rehearsals and performances in *Boxing Gym*, it's the purer distillation of a kinetic education.

Watch Wiseman's films together, and you'll realize that different spaces register silence differently. The filmmaker's musical ear is richly apparent in *Boxing Gym*'s gloved rhythms and concrete echoes, to say nothing of the entrancing pendulum swings of side-by-side workouts. As in *La Danse*, Wiseman emulates the concentration of his subjects, but here he also picks up on their loose camaraderie in conversations about joblessness, the joy of getting hit and, closest to the bone, the Virginia Tech killings. The gym is still a masculine space, but one in which women (and children) are a significant presence. For more on the evolution of gender and "training," one might well consult the filmmaker's own catalog: *Basic Training* (1971), *Manoeuvre* (1979), and *Missile* (1987). Wiseman's gym is finally a gathering place, one with atmosphere and history (and hardly any headphones) — all the more reason to see it in a movie theater. SFBG

BOXING GYM opens Wed/22 at the Roxie.

Bell Biv DeVoe plays Yoshi's San Francisco Thu/23.

Music listings are compiled by Cheryl Eddy. Since club life is unpredictable, it's a good idea to call ahead to confirm bookings and hours. Prices are listed when provided to us. Submit items for the listings at listings@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks.

WEDNESDAY 22

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Agalloch, Allerseelen, Dispirit Great American Music Hall. 8pm, $19.
Michael Chase and Lorenzo Rite Spot, 2099 Folsom, SF; www.ritespotcafe.net. 9pm, free.
Murkins, Attack Plan, Station and the Monster Bottom of the Hill. 9pm, $8.
Jason King Band Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, $15.
"Polk Street Lounge Comedy and Burlesque Show" Hemlock Tavern. 9pm, $6. With Mary Van Note, Nato Green, Sean Keane, and Miss Mae Western.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

"Christmas in San Francisco with Russ Lorenson and Friends" Rrazz Room. 8pm, $40.
Gaucho, Michael Abraham Amnesia. 7pm, free.
Horace-scope Coda. 10pm, $7.
Spaceheater Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 8:45pm, free.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, $18-26.

DANCE CLUBS

Booty Call Q-Bar, 456 Castro, SF; www.bootycallwednesdays.com. 9pm. Juanita Moore hosts this dance party, featuring DJ Robot Hustle.
Cannonball Beauty Bar. 10pm, free. Rock, indie, and nu-disco with DJ White Mike.
Ceremony Presents Factory Records Night Knockout. 9pm, $5. Dark pop and new wave with DJs Deadbeat and Yule Be Sorry.
Club Shutter Elbo Room. 10pm, $5. Goth with Nako, Omar, and Justin.
Hands Down! Bar on Church. 9pm, free. With DJs Claksaarb, Mykill, and guests spinning indie, electro, house, and bangers.
Jam Fresh Wednesdays Vessel, 85 Campton, SF; (415) 433-8585. 9:30pm, free. With DJs Slick D, Chris Clouse, Rich Era, Don Lynch, and more spinning top40, mashups, hip hop, and remixes. **Mary-Go-Round** Lookout, 3600 16th St, SF; (415) 431-0306. 10pm, $5. A weekly drag show with hosts Cookie Dough, Pollo Del Mar, and Suppositori Spelling.
Red Wine Social Triple Crown. 5:30-9:30pm, free. DJ TophOne and guests spin outernational funk and get drunk.
Respect Wednesdays End Up. 10pm, $5. Rotating DJs Daddy Rolo, Young Fyah, Irie Dole, I-Vier, Sake One, Serg, and more spinning reggae, dancehall, roots, lovers rock, and mash ups.
Synchronize Il Pirata, 2007 16th St, SF; (415) 626-2626. 10pm, free. Psychedelic dance music with DJs Helios, Gatto Matto, Psy Lotus, Intergalactoid, and guests.

THURSDAY 23

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Bell Biv DeVoe Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, $25-35.
"Big Cat Blue Holiday Concert" Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, $15.
Blind Willies, Flash Gilmore, Funbeatles Stud. 8pm.
"Gospel Christmas with Kim Nalley and Tammy Hall" Rrazz Room. 8pm, $35.
Vienna Teng, Alex Wong and friends, Paul Joey Ryan, Amber Rubarth Great American Music Hall. 8pm, $26.
Michael Zapruder, We Is Shore Dedicated Hemlock Tavern. 9pm, $5.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Def Poets Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St, SF; (415) 642-0474. 8:45pm, free.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Bluegrass and old-time jam Atlas Café. 8pm, free.
Horse Thief Jack Rite Spot, 2099 Folsom, SF; www.ritespotcafe.net. 9pm, free.

DANCE CLUBS

Afrolicious Elbo Room. 9:30pm, $10. DJs Pleasuremaker and Señor Oz spin Afrobeat, tropicália, electro, samba, and funk.
Caribbean Connection Little Baobab, 3388 19th St, SF; (415) 643-3558. 10pm, $3. DJ Stevie B and guests spin reggae, soca, zouk, reggaetón, and more.
Drop the Pressure Underground SF. 6-10pm, free. Electro, house, and datafunk highlight this weekly happy hour.
Gigantic Beauty Bar. 9pm, free. With DJs Eli Glad, Greg J, and White Mike spinning indie, rock, disco, and soul.
Good Foot Som., 2925 16th St, SF; (415) 558-8521. 10pm, free. With DJs spinning R&B, Hip hop, classics, and soul.
Guilty Pleasures Gestalt, 3159 16th St, SF; (415) 560-0137. 9:30pm, free. DJ TophZilla, Rob Metal, DJ Stef, and Disco-D spin punk, metal, electro-funk, and 80s.
Jivin' Dirty Disco Butter, 354 11th St., SF; (415) 863-5964. 8pm, free. With DJs spinning disco, funk, and classics.
Koko Puffs Koko Cocktails, 1060 Geary, SF; (415) 885-4788. 10pm, free. Dubby roots reggae and Jamaican funk from rotating DJs.
Peaches Skylark, 10pm, free. With an all female DJ line up featuring Deeandroid, Lady Fingaz, That Girl, and Umami spinning hip hop.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 32 »

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yoshis.com
Top 100 Restaurants 2009 & 2010 –SF Chronicle
Voted "Best live music venue in SF" –SF Magazine 8/10

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CD Release: Crazy For Christmas
Thurs, Dec 23 tomorrow!
Rare Small Club Appearance
BELL BIV DEVOE
HOLIDAY "POISON"
Fri, Dec 24 this weekend!
CLAIRDEE'S CHRISTMAS
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Sun, Dec 26 Yoshi's Debut!
GALLAGHER
HOLIDAY SMASH!
Dec 27-28 Yoshi's Debut!
MORRIS DAY & THE TIME
CHRISTMAS TIME
Wed, Dec 29
THE TUBES
Featuring FEE WAYBILL
Dec 30 - Jan 1
Rare Small Club Appearance
DIANNE REEVES
LIVE NEW YEARS EVE
Coast-to-Coast Broadcast on NPR
Sun, Jan 2
Yoshi's Debut!
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Thurs, Jan 6
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BIG LIGHT
THURSDAY JANUARY 6TH 8PM $12 (ROCK/SKA)
TITAN UPS
WICKED MERCIES • FRANCO NERO
DJ DR.SCOTT
FRIDAY JANUARY 7TH 9PM $10 (FUNK/HIP-HOP)
BLACKMAHAL
AFROLICIOUS • DJ TIMOTEO
SATURDAY JANUARY 8TH 9PM $11/$13 (COUNTRY/BLUEGRASS)
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THE EARL BROTHERS
HANG JONES • WALKING IN SUNLIGHT
FRIDAY JANUARY 14TH 9:30PM $15 (ROCK)
SWEET APPLE / DEAD MEADOW
CARLTON MELTON
SATURDAY JANUARY 15TH 9:30PM $10/$12 (ROCK/FOLK)
NICKI BLUHM (CD RELEASE)
THE BLANK TAPES
DAVE MULLIGAN (SOLO)
DJ SUPERCHILL
MONDAY JANUARY 17TH 8PM $10 (FOLK)
VELVETWINOS (CD RELEASE)
BRIAN RAVIZZA
FRIDAY JANUARY 21ST 9PM $12 (INDIE/ELECTRO)
PLANET BOOTY
SUPER ADVENTURE CLUB
SATURDAY JANUARY 22ND 9PM $10/$12 (ROCK)
KC TURNER PRESENTS:
THE FAMILY CREST (CD RELEASE)
THE MOANIN' DOVE • THE WELCOME MATT
TUESDAY JANUARY 25TH 8PM $17 (INDIE)
THE GHOST OF A SABER TOOTH TIGER (SEAN LENNON AND CHARLOTTE KEMP MUHL)
LAURA GIBSON
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 26TH 8PM $12/$15 (FOLK)
THE HANDSOME FAMILY
SEAN ROWE
THURSDAY JANUARY 27TH 9PM $10 (ROCK)
PEBBLE THEORY / WHITNEY NICHOLE (CD RELEASE)
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CONT»

FRIDAY 24

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Alvon Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, $20.
Oakland Interfaith Gospel Ensemble Slim's. 7 and 9:30pm, $15.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Baxtalo Drom Amnesia. 9pm, $7-10.

SATURDAY 25

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

"Bud E. Luv Christmas Show" Rrazz Room. 8pm, $30.
"13th Annual Black X-Mass" Elbo Room. 9pm. With Graves Bros Deluxe, Los Murderachis Dimesland, and more.
Earl Thomas and the Blues Ambassadors Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, $22.

FOLK/WORLD/COUNTRY

Craig Ventresco and Meredith Axelrod Atlas Café. 4pm, free.

DANCE CLUBS

Death Guild X-Mess Night DNA Lounge. 9:30pm, $5. Gothic, industrial, and synth-pop with Decay, Joe Radio, and Melting Girl.
DJ Floydaclaus Hemlock Tavern. 9pm, free.
45Club Knockout. 10pm, free. Funky soul with dX the Funky Gran Paw, Dirty Dishes, and English Steve.
Go Bang! Presents: Ho Ho Bang! Deco Lounge, 510 Larkin, SF; www.gobangsf.com. 9pm, $5. Disco with Steve Fabus, Tres Lingerie, and Sergio.

Cracker plays the Independent Mon/27. | PHOTO BY RAHAV SEGEV

SUNDAY 26

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

"Gorilla Holiday Takeover" DNA Lounge. 5:30pm, $12. With To Memory and Me, Twisted Blues, One for the Masses, and more.
Lucky Peterson Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, $20.

JAZZ/NEW MUSIC

Kim Nalley Rrazz Room. 7pm, $32.50.

DANCE CLUBS

Dub Mission Elbo Room. 9pm, $6. Dub,

Agalloch plays the Great American Music Hall Wed/22.

roots, and classic dancehall with DJs Sep, Maneesh the Twister, and guests Roy Two Thousand and DJ Quest
Gloss Sundays Trigger, 2344 Market, SF; (415) 551-CLUB. 7pm. With DJ Hawthorne spinning house, funk, soul, retro, and disco.
Honey Soundsystem Paradise Lounge. 8pm–2am. "Dance floor for dancers – sound system for lovers." Got that?
Kick It Bar on Church. 9pm. Hip-hop with DJ Zax.
Religion Bar on Church. 3pm. With DJ Nikita.
Swing Out Sundays Rock-It Room. 7pm, free (dance lessons $15). DJ BeBop Burnie spins 20s through 50s swing, jive, and more.

MONDAY 27

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Allstar Weekend, Dylan Fox and the Waves, Greenlight District, Vegas is North Slim's. 5:45pm, $16.
Cracker, Camper Van Beethoven Independent. 8pm, $25.
Morris Day and the Time Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, $30-45
Lucky Peterson Biscuits and Blues. 8 and 10pm, $20.
Richard Rite Spot, 2099 Folsom, SF; www.ritespotcafe.net. 9pm, free.

DANCE CLUBS

Death Guild DNA Lounge. 9:30pm, $3-5. Gothic, industrial, and synthpop with Joe Radio, Decay, and Melting Girl.
Krazy Mondays Beauty Bar. 10pm, free. With DJs Ant-1, $ir-Tipp, Ruby Red I, Lo, and Gelo spinning hip hop.
M.O.M. Madrone Art Bar. 6pm, free. With DJ Gordo Cabeza and guests playing all Motown every Monday.
Manic Mondays Bar on Church. 9pm. Drink 80-cent cosmos with Djs Mark Andrus and Dangerous Dan.
Musik for Your Teeth Revolution Café, 3248 22nd St., SF; (415) 642-0474. 5pm, free. Soul cookin' happy hour tunes with DJ Antonino Musco.
Network Mondays Azul Lounge, One Tillman Pl, SF; www.inhousetalent.com. 9pm, $5. Hip-hop, R&B, and spoken word open mic, plus featured performers.
Skylarking Skylark. 10pm, free. With resident DJs I & I Vibration, Beatnok, and Mr. Lucky and weekly guest DJs.

TUESDAY 28

ROCK/BLUES/HIP-HOP

Morris Day and the Time Yoshi's San Francisco. 8 and 10pm, $30-45.
Hollow Earth, Iron Witch, Vanishing Breed Hemlock Tavern. 9pm, $5.
Kitten on the Keys Rite Spot, 2099 Folsom, SF; www.ritespotcafe.net. 9pm, free.
Spirits in the Basement, Filthy Mudbloods, Laughing Prophets of Doom Bottom of the Hill. 9pm, $8.
X, Ray Manzarek Slim's. 8pm, $31.

DANCE CLUBS

Alcoholocaust Presents Argus Lounge. 9pm, free. With DJ Lightnin' Jeff G. and DJ Filthy Phil.
Eclectic Company Skylark, 9pm, free. DJs Tones and Jaybee spin old school hip hop, bass, dub, glitch, and electro.
Share the Love Trigger, 2344 Market, SF; (415) 551-CLUB. 5pm, free. With DJ Pam Hubbuck spinning house.
Womanizer Bar on Church. 9pm. With DJ Nuxx. SFBG

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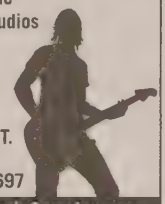

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7:30PM · $8 ADV & DOOR
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8PM · $6 ADV & DOOR
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• Kenny Eng
• Run and Tell

WEDNESDAY 12/29
9PM · $8 ADV & DOOR
• The Horses Mac
• Clayton Joseph Scott
• Matt Bradford

THURSDAY 12/30
8PM · $8 ADV & DOOR
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• Montana 1948
• Almost Honest
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9PM · $10 ADV & DOOR
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Holiday candy: In *Candid*, Sweet Can Productions revamps its popular performance *Yes Sweet Can* with new music and performers.

Stage listings are compiled by Guardian staff. Performance times may change; call venues to confirm. Reviewers are Robert Avila, Rita Felciano, and Nicole Gluckstern. Submit items for the listings at listings@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks. For complete listings, see www.sfbg.com.

THEATER

ONGOING

Candid Dance Mission Theater, 3316 24th St; 273-4633, www.sweetcanproductions.com. $15-60. Call for dates and times. Through Jan 9. Sweet Can Productions presents an acrobatic holiday circus extravaganza.

Dirty Little Showtunes! A Parody Musical Revue New Conservatory Theatre Center, 25 Van Ness; 861-8972, www.nctcsf.org. $24-40. Wed-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through Jan 16. Tom Orr's adults-only holiday show returns, with direction by F. Allen Sawyer and musical direction by Scrumbly Koldewyn.

Golden Girls: The Christmas Episodes CounterPULSE, 1310 Mission; www.ticketfly.com. $25. Thurs, 7 and 9pm. Through Thurs/23. Heklina, Cookie Dough, Matthew Martin, and Pollo Del Mar return with their stage tribute to the sitcom.

Joyful Noise: A Gospel Celebration of Christmas Southside Theater, Fort Mason Center; 345-7575, www.LHTSF.org. $25-50. Call for dates and times. Through Dec 31. Lorraine Hansberry Theatre presents a rechristened version of their *Black Nativity* production.

The Lion in Winter Actors Theatre, 855 Bush; 345-1287, www.ticketweb.com. $26-38. Wed-Sat, 8pm. Through Jan 15. Actors Theatre of SF presents James Goldman's play of palace intrigue.

Mr. YooWho's Holiday NOHspace, 2840 Mariposa; (800) 838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. $10-18. Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through Jan 2. European clown Moshe Cohen returns to SF for a third run at NOHspace.

Party of 2 – The New Mating Musical Shelton Theater, 533 Sutter; (800) 838-3006, www.partyof2themusical.com. $27-29. Sun, 3pm. Open-ended. A musical about relationships by *Shopping! The Musical* author Morris Bobrow.

Pearls Over Shanghai Thrillpeddlers' Hypnodrome, 575 Tenth St; 1-800-838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. $30-69. Sat, 8pm. Through April 9. Thrillpeddlers' acclaimed production of the Cockettes musical continues its successful run.

Santaland Diaries Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson; (800) 838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. $20-30. Nightly, 8pm (also Thurs/23, 5pm). Through Dec 30. David Sinaiko returns as Crumpet in Combined Artform's ninth annual production of the David Sedaris play.

Shrek The Musical Orpheum Theatre, 1192 Market; (888) SHN-1799, www.shnsf.com. $30-99. Tues, 8pm, Wed, 2 and 8pm; Thurs-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 2 and 8pm; Sun, 2pm (no performances Fri/24, Sat/25, and Dec 31). Through Jan 2. Eric Petersen stars in the stage version of the animated blockbuster.

Siddhartha, the Bright Path The Marsh Studio Theater, 1074 Valencia; (800) 838-3006, www.themarsh.org. $15-35. Call for dates and times. Through Jan 9. Marsh Youth Theater presents a holiday celebration, directed by Lisa Quoresimo.

A Tale of Two Genres SF Playhouse, Stage Two, 533 Sutter; www.un-scripted.com. $10-20. Wed-Thurs, 8pm. Through Thurs/23. Un-Scripted Theater Company performs an improvised musical in the style of Charles Dickens.

BAY AREA

Arabian Nights Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Thrust Stage, 2025 Addison, Berk; (510) 647-2549, www.berkeleyrep.org. $34-73. Call for dates and times. Through Dec 30. Tony-winning Mary Zimmerman's production makes a return to Berkeley Rep.

Becoming Julia Morgan Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant, Berk; (510) 984-3864, www.brownpapertickets.com. $24-30. Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 5pm. Through Jan 9. Janis Stevens stars in Belinda Taylor's play about the trail-blazing architect.

A Christmas Memory TheatreWorks at Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield, Palo Alto; (650) 463-1960, www.theatreworks.org. $19-67. Tues-Wed, 7:30pm; Thurs-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 2 and 8pm; Sun, 2 and 7pm (also Dec 23, 2pm; Dec 24, 7pm). Through Sun/26. TheatreWorks presents the seasonal tale by Truman Capote.

East 14th – True Tales of a Reluctant Player The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston Way, Berk; (800) 838-3006, www.themarsh.org. $20-50. Call for times. Through Feb 13. Don Reed's one-man show continues its extended run.

Lemony Snicket's The Composer is Dead Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison, Berk; (510) 647-2949, www.berkeleyrep.org. Call for dates and times. Through Jan 15. Berkeley Rep premieres the new musical, written by Lemony Snicket, with music by Nathaniel Stookey.

Naughty and Nice: A Meg and Billy Christmas Aurora Theatre Company, 2081 Addison, Berk; (510) 843-4822, www.auroratheatre.org. $23-25. Call for dates and times. Through Dec 30. Bay Area husband and wife cabaret duo Meg Mackay and Billy Philadelphia return with a holiday show.

Of the Earth – The Salt Plays: Part 2 Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby; (510) 841-6500, www.shotgunplayers.org. $17-30. Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 5pm. Through Jan 30. Shotgun Players present the second half of writer and director Jon Tracy's *Odyssey*-inspired tale, with music by Brendan West.

The World's Funniest Bubble Show The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston, Berk; (800) 838-3006, www.themarsh.org. $8-50. Sun, 11am (also Wed/22-Thurs/23 and Sun/26-Tues/28, 11am and 2pm; and Dec 29-30, 11am). Through Dec 30. The Amazing Bubble Man's show presents flying saucer bubbles and other wonders.

PERFORMANCE/ DANCE

American Pop Parable The Make-Out Room, 3225 22nd St; 647-2888, www.makeoutroom.com. Mon/27, 8pm. $5. The Cat's Pajamas presents an evening of storytelling and song, with MamaCoAl, DeCoy Gallerina, Alan Kaufman, Jelal Hyler, Julie Indelicato, and Cameron Ochs Band.

Flow (The Winged Crocodile)/Trains ODC Theater, 3153 17th; 863-9834, www.odcdance.org. Wed/22, 8pm. $18. The Relationship presents a piece with text by Leslie Scalapino and music by Jean Jeanrenaud.

Forking II: A Merry Forking! Christmas Off-Market Theatres, 965 Mission; (800) 838-3006, www.pianofight.com. Call for dates and times (through Dec 30). PianoFight presents a holiday-themed choose-your-own-adventure play.

Kung Pao Kosher Comedy New Asia Restaurant, 772 Pacific; 522-3737, www.koshercomedy.com. Thurs/23, 5 and 8:30pm; Fri/24-Sat/25, 6 and 9:30pm; Sun/26, 5 and 8:30pm. $42-62. The 18th annual celebration of Jewish comedy in a Chinese restaurant.

Texas Chainsaw Yuletide Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson; (800) 838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. Wed/22-Thurs/23, 9:30pm). $15. Combined Artform presents a one-man show by comedian Will Franken.

BAY AREA

The Coverlettes Cover Christmas 2020 Addison, Berk; (510) 644-2020. Wed/22-Thurs/23, 8pm. $18.50-19.50. The fictitious girl group presents a Christmas cabaret concert.

Striking 12 TheatreWorks at Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield, Palo Alto; (650) 463-1960, www.theatreworks.org. Tues/28, 7:30pm (through Dec 31). $56-75. Indie pop group GrooveLily ushers in the new year a rewired version of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*. SFBG

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EASTER TEETH
Stork Club Oakland
AGALLOCH
ALLERSEELEN
DISPIRIT
Great American Music Hall
THE MURKINS
THE ATTACK PLAN
SISTHM & THE MONSTER
Bottom of the Hill

THU 12/23
VIENNA TENG
ALEX WONG & FRIENDS
Great American Music Hall

TENDERLIONS
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MICHAEL ZAPRUDER
WE IS SHORE
DEDICATED
Hemlock
BLIND WILLIES
FLASH GILMORE AND THE FUNBEATLES
The Stud

FRI 12/24
GALLAGHER
Yoshi's

SAT 12/25
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

SUN 12/26
TOWER OF POWER
Yoshi's
KIM HALLEY
Razz Room

MON 12/27
MY DADS
ECHO LOCATION
Mama Bear's Cafe
ALLSTAR WEEKEND
DYLAN FOX & THE WAVES
Slim's
CRACKER
CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN
Independent
HOLLOW EARTH
VANISHING BREED
Hemlock
SPIRITS IN THE BASEMENT
FILTHY MUDBLOODS
Bottom of the Hill

TUE 12/28
X
Slim's

WED 12/29
THE TET HOLIDAY
TH MRCY HOT SPRINGS
Uptown, Oakland
ACTS OF SEDITION
MAN AMOUNG WOLVES
Sub-Mission Gallery
THE YELLOW DRESS
ALRIGHT CLASS
Bottom of the Hill
VICTIMS FAMILY
SCHLONG
Elbo Room
PERSEPHONE'S BEES
MARC & THE CASUALS
Hemlock

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FILM LISTINGS

Nicole Kidman stars as a grieving mother in John Cameron Mitchell's *Rabbit Hole*, out Sat/25. | PHOTO BY JOJO WHILDEN

Film listings are edited by Cheryl Eddy. Reviewers are Kimberly Chun, Michelle Devereaux, Peter Galvin, Max Goldberg, Dennis Harvey, Johnny Ray Huston, Louis Peitzman, Lynn Rapoport, Ben Richardson, and Matt Sussman. The film intern is Ryan Prendiville. For rep house showtimes, see Rep Clock. For first-run showtimes, see Movie Guide at www.sfbg.com. For complete film listings, see www.sfbg.com.

OPENING

Boxing Gym See "Fight Club." (1:30) *Roxie.*

Casino Jack An unfortunate curtain call for director George Hickenlooper, who died two months ago, this biopic about infamous Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff — sprung from federal prison just in time for Xmas '10 — is no more successful than his prior stab at Edie Sedgwick, 2006's *Factory Girl*. He chooses to portray the real-life protagonist's wild ride through the Bush years — buying politicians (notably Tom DeLay, who's about to start his own prison term), screwing the "little guys" (like casino-owning Native tribes), furthering the conservative "values" agenda while pocketing a whole lotta $$$ — as a farcical Horatio Alger success story run amuck, not unlike recent *The Informant!* (2009) or *Catch Me If You Can* (2002). But neither script or handling are deft enough to pull that off, resulting in an irksomely broad cartoon of recent events that isn't tough enough on the crimes and corruption at hand. Worse, the film — and in particular star Kevin Spacey (representing a rare occasion on which Hollywood's substitute is *less* handsome than the figure portrayed) — at times seem to actually admire Abramoff as a ballsy, spunky, big swingin'-dick example of all-American go-getterness. Sure he's got flaws, but ya gotta love a guy with such brass cojones, right? Wrong. Spacey is very showy here, misjudging his target such that he comes off an egomaniacal jerk playing an egomaniacal jerk. The film's stylistic gambits (like its perky 60s vocal-ensemble score) are likewise smug 'n' snarky in ways more grating than clever. The one standout in a too-hardworking cast is Jon Lovitz as the sleaziest of all Abramoff's sleazy-operator cronies; he knows how to go way over the top while maintaining precise, hilarious control. You're better off seeing Alex Gibney's recent doc *Casino Jack and the United States of Money*, which far more skillfully weighs this subject with commingled awe, sarcasm, and revulsion. (1:48) *Embarcadero.* (Harvey)

Gulliver's Travels Jack Black stars in this updated take on the big-dude-in-little-people-land story. (1:25)

Little Fockers Yep, another one. (1:50) *Four Star, Marina, Shattuck.*

Rabbit Hole If *Rabbit Hole* doesn't sound like the kind of movie you'd want to watch, I don't blame you. Following the lives of a married couple dealing with the loss of their young son, the film sounds a lot like the kind of Lifetime movie you accidentally spend a hung over Sunday sniffling through. But *Rabbit Hole* is a smart, complex addition to the genre, with exceptional performances from leads Nicole Kidman (Becca) and Aaron Eckhart (Howie), and a script by David Lindsay-Abaire, adapting his Pulitzer Prize-winning play. Director John Cameron Mitchell infuses *Rabbit Hole* with his trademark dark humor, creating a film that understands the serious toll grief takes but isn't

afraid to step back and laugh at life, too. Special attention must also be paid to the supporting cast, including Dianne Wiest as Becca's mother, and newcomer Miles Teller as Jason. Explaining Jason's role would be giving away too much — it's enough to say that his presence is part of what elevates *Rabbit Hole* from grief porn to one of this year's best. (1:32) *Embarcadero.* (Peitzman)

Somewhere See "In a Lonely Place." (1:38)

Summer Wars Teenage mega-nerd Kenji is a mathematical genius, already employed as an admin by Oz, a global virtual-reality program that's kind of what Facebook will probably become in a few years — a place where everyone on the planet maintains an avatar, and carries on all of their necessary and unnecessary business, from city management to mortal combat. Basically, Oz won the internet. You might think *Summer Wars*, a rather charming animated tale from Japanese director Mamoru Hosoda, would make Oz the villain in this tale, but instead, it's a rogue AI program that brings the online world to its knees with increasingly dangerous mischief. Kenji's role in this virtual-reality disaster is complicated by the fact that in the real world, he's been cajoled into pretending to be his crush's boyfriend during an extended-family reunion at her great-grandmother's estate. Fortunately, the expected clichés that come with this subplot are forgivable, since most of *Summer Wars* is comprised of enjoyable original ideas, with delightful animation to boot. (1:53) *Opera Plaza.* (Eddy)

» **True Grit** Jeff Bridges fans, resist the urge to see your Dude in computer-trippy 3D and make *True Grit* your holiday movie of choice. Directors Ethan and Joel Coen revisit (with characteristic oddball touches) the 1968 Charles Portis novel that already spawned a now-classic 1969 film, which earned John Wayne an Oscar for his turn as gruff U.S. Marshall Rooster Cogburn. (The all-star cast also included Dennis Hopper, Glen Campbell, Robert Duvall, and Strother Martin.) Into Wayne's ten-gallon shoes steps an exceptionally crusty Bridges, whose banter with rival bounty hunter La Boeuf (a spot-on Matt Damon) and relationship with young Mattie Ross (poised newcomer Hailee Steinfeld) — who hires him to find the man who killed her father — likely won't win the recently Oscar'd actor another statuette, but that doesn't mean *True Grit* isn't thoroughly entertaining. Josh Brolin and a barely-recognizable Barry Pepper round out a cast that's fully committed to honoring two timeless American genres: Western and Coen. (1:50) *California, Presidio.* (Eddy)

ONGOING

All Good Things (1:41) *Lumiere.*

» **Animal Kingdom** (2:02) *Opera Plaza.*

» **Black Swan** "Lose yourself," ballet company head Thomas (Vincent Cassel) whispers to his leading lady, Nina (Natalie Portman), moments before she takes the stage. But Nina is already consumed with trying to *find* herself, and rarely has a journey of self-discovery been so unsettling. Set in New York City's catty, competitive ballet world, *Black Swan* samples from earlier dance films (notably 1948's *The Red Shoes*, but also 1977's *Suspiria*, with a smidgen of 1995's *Showgirls*), though director Darren Aronofsky is nothing if not his own visionary. *Black Swan* resembles his 2008 *The Wrestler* somewhat thematically, with its focus on the anguish of an athlete under ten tons of pressure, but it's a stylistic 180. Gone is the gritty, stripped-down aesthetic used to depict a sad-sack strongman. Like Dario Argento's 1977 horror fantasy, the gory, elegantly choreographed *Black Swan* is set in a hyper-constructed world, with stabbingly obvious color palettes (literally, white = good; black = evil) and dozens of mirrors emphasizing (over and over again) the film's doppelgänger obsession. As Nina, Portman gives her most dynamic performance to date. In addition to the thespian fireworks required while playing a goin'-batshit character, she also nails the role's considerable athletic demands. (1:50) *California, Empire, Piedmont, Presidio, Sundance Kabuki.* (Eddy)

Burlesque (1:48) *Empire, 1000 Van Ness, SF Center, Shattuck.*

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1:52) *1000 Van Ness, SF Center.*

» **Fair Game** (1:46) *Opera Plaza, Piedmont, Shattuck.*

The Fighter Once enough of a contenda to have fought Sugar Ray Leonard — and won, though there are lingering questions about that verdict's justice — Dicky (Christian Bale) is now a washed-up, crack-addicted mess whose hopes for a comeback seem just another expression of empty braggadocio. Ergo it has fallen to the

CONTINUES ON PAGE 38 »

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younger brother he's supposedly "training," Micky (Mark Wahlberg), to endure the "managerial" expertise of their smothering-bullying ma (Melissa Leo) and float their large girl gang family of trigger-tempered sisters. That's made even worse by the fact that they've gotten him nothing but chump fights in which he's matched someone above his weight and skill class in order to boost the other boxer's ranking. When Micky meets Charlene (Amy Adams), an ambitious type despite her current job as a bartender, this hardboiled new girlfriend insists the only way he can really get ahead is by ditching bad influences — meaning mom and Dicky, who take this shutout as a declaration of war. The fact-based script and David O. Russell's direction do a good job lending grit and humor to what's essentially a 1930s Warner Brothers melodrama — the kind that might have had Pat O'Brien as the "good" brother and James Cagney as the ne'er-do-well one who redeems himself by fadeout. Even if things do get increasingly formulaic (less 1980's *Raging Bull* and more 1976's *Rocky*), the memorable performances by Bale (going skeletal once again), Wahlberg (a limited actor ideally cast) and Leo (excellent as usual in an atypically brassy role) make this more than worthwhile. As for Adams, she's just fine — but by now it's hard to forget the too many cutesy parts she's been typecast in since 2005's *Junebug*. (1:54) *1000 Van Ness, SF Center, Sundance Kabuki.* (Harvey)

» **The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest** (2:28) *Lumiere, Shattuck.*

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows — Part 1 (2:26) *Empire, 1000 Van Ness.*

How Do You Know With a title like *How Do You Know*, it's amazing James L. Brooks' latest rom-com isn't a total disaster. Don't get me wrong, it's bad — but there are one or two redeeming scenes that might justify a late-night cable viewing.

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Reese Witherspoon stars as Lisa, a professional softball player who gets cut from the Olympic team and has to figure out how to live life not as an athlete, but as a woman. If that sounds offensive, good: the most perplexing thing about *How Do You Know* is the way it reduces an otherwise strong female lead to traditional rom-com angst — will she choose cocky baseball star Matty (Owen Wilson) or the doting, hapless George (Paul Rudd)? Even when Lisa admits that she doesn't think about settling down with a guy or having a baby, the film shoves her in that direction. Adding insult to injury, Jack Nicholson plays George's dad Charles, padding out a corporate corruption side plot that stretches the movie to a plodding two hours. (1:53) *1000 Van Ness, Presidio, Sundance Kabuki.* (Peitzman)

I Love You Phillip Morris (1:38) *Shattuck.*
Inside Job (2:00) *Clay, Shattuck.*
The King's Speech (1:58) *Albany, Embarcadero, Piedmont, Sundance Kabuki.*
Love and Other Drugs (1:53) *SF Center.*
Made in Dagenham (1:53) *Opera Plaza, Shattuck.*

Megamind (1:36) *1000 Van Ness.*
127 Hours (1:30) *Bridge, Shattuck.*
Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale (1:42) *Embarcadero, Shattuck.*
The Social Network (2:00) *1000 Van Ness, Shattuck.*
Tangled (1:32) *1000 Van Ness, Presidio, SF Center.*
The Tempest (1:50) *SF Center.*
Tiny Furniture (1:38) *Lumiere, Shattuck.*
The Tourist (1:44) *Four Star, 1000 Van Ness, Presidio, Shattuck, Sundance Kabuki.*
Tron: Legacy A rare sequel among remakes, *Tron: Legacy* remains true to the 1982 nerd cult classic: it's essentially a silly movie about being transported into a computer world where everyone dresses in rave couture. Jeff Bridges returns, now in opposing roles. On one side he's computer genius Kevin Flynn, bearded zen master, and across the uncanny valley he's CLU, an ageless software lord. Flynn's been stuck in the Matri...er...Grid for decades, as CLU followed his programming to its logical conclusion: genocide. This is a bit too heavy of a theme for a film where almost every character gets blown to bytes upon introduction (cough, Michael Sheen, cough) but the light cycles and death pong are really cool in 3D. The plot, when it's not setting up Disney's inevitable sequels (hello, pointless Cillian Murphy) is *Star Wars* (1977), except Obi-wan Lebowski is the father. The son is Sam (Garrett Hedlund), whose good looks, penchant for extreme sports, and vacuous personality are the perfect avatar for our geek fantasy, where women strip us bare and are sexy guard dogs (Olivia Wilde.) While not passing the Bechdel Test, the film may be worth admission to hear the Dude's Jedi utter "It's biodigital jazz, man!" Look out for a special cameo by Daft Punk, playing hits from its score, which sounds like Kraftwerk mixing Vangelis and Danny Elfman (available in stores now.) They'll be the ones wearing helmets. No, the other ones. (2:05) *Castro, Marina, 1000 Van Ness, Sundance Kabuki.* (Prendiville)

White Material (1:42) *Opera Plaza.*
Yogi Bear (1:19) *1000 Van Ness.* SFBG

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first run venues

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Bridge Geary/Blake. 267-4893.

Century Plaza Noor off El Camino, South SF. (650) 742-9200.

Century 20 Junipero Serra/John Daly, Daly City. (650) 994-7469.

Clay Fillmore/Clay. 267-4893.

Embarcadero Center Cinema 1 Embarcadero Center, promenade level. 267-4893.

Empire West Portal/Vicente. 661-2539.

Four Star Clement/23rd Ave. 666-3488.

Kabuki Cinema Post/Fillmore. 929-4650.

Lumiere California/Polk. 267-4893.

Marina Theatre 2149 Chestnut. www.lntsf.com/marina_theatre

Metreon Fourth St/Mission. 1-800-FANDANGO.

Metro Union/Webster. 931-1685.

1000 Van Ness 1000 Van Ness. 1-800-231-3307.

Opera Plaza Van Ness/Golden Gate. 267-4893.

Presidio 2340 Chestnut. 776-2388.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331214-00 The following person is doing business as **Integrity Marketing**, 662 Huron Ave San Francisco, CA 94112. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 11/2/10. Signed Richard G. Habib. This statement was filed by Maribel Jaldon on November 2, 2010. **#113244. December 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331485-00 The following person is doing business as **1. Planet Care / Global Health Access Program, 2. Foundation for the People of Burma**, 225 Bush St #590 San Francisco, CA 94104. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Hal Nathan. This statement was filed by Magdalena Zevallos on November 16, 2010. **#113245. December 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331540-00 The following person is doing business as **NutraWorks**, 564 Market St # 200 San Francisco, CA 94104. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 11/17/10. Signed Jason Miller D.C.. This statement was filed by Magdalena Zevallos on November 17, 2010. **#113250. December 15, 22, 29, 2010 and January 5, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331594-00 The following person is doing business as **JG Painting & Leasing**, 208 Woolsey St San Francisco, CA 94134. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 11/9/10. Signed Jan Gay. This statement was filed by Maribel Jaldon on November 19, 2010. **#113243. December 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331620-00 The following person is doing business as **Miss Jenny Design**, 4280 22nd St San Francisco, CA 94114. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 2/1/10. Signed Jennifer Martinez. This statement was filed by Jennifer Wong on November 22, 2010. **#113247. December 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331785-00 The following person is doing business as **Box Cubed**, 532 B Simonds Loop San Francisco, CA 94129. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Mitchell Vaughn. This statement was filed by Karen J. Hong Yee on December 2, 2010. **#113253. December 22, 29, 2010, January 5 and 12, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331789-00 The following person is doing business as **Hmngbrd**, 1108 Howard St 3rd Floor San Francisco, CA 94103. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 12/2/10. Signed Kiley Hertel. This statement was filed by Susanna Chin on December 2, 2010. **#113248. December 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2010**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0331943-00 The following person is doing business as **Green and Shine Cleaning**, 930 Pine St #106 San Francisco, CA 94108. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 12/8/10. Signed Darlene Chan. This statement was filed by Susanna Chin on December 8, 2010. **#113252. December 15, 22, 29, 2010 and January 5, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0332043-00 The following person is doing business as **Kennedy Investment Group**, 84 Miraloma Dr San Francisco, CA 94127. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 12/13/10. Signed Zhang Lucy W. This statement was filed by Maribel Jaldon on December 13, 2010. **#113251. December 15, 22, 29, 2010 and January 5, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0332061-00 The following person is doing business as **Indochine 508**, 508 Valencia St San Francisco, CA 94103. This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date N/A. Signed Tse W Ho. This statement was filed by Mariedyne L. Argente on December 14, 2010. **#113256. December 22, 29, 2010, January 5 and 12, 2011**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. A-0332071-00 The following person is doing business as **SwitchPoint Planning**, 2101 Folsom St San Francisco, CA 94110. This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced business under the above-listed fictitious business name on the date 12/15/10. Signed Jumana Nabti. This statement was filed by Maribel Jaldon on December 15, 2010. **#113254. December 22, 29, 2010, January 5 and 12, 2011**

NOTICE The Annual Report of the Burk Chung Foundation, 837 Washington Street, San Francisco, California 94108 is available at the Foundation's office for nspection during regular business hours. Copies of the Annual Report have been furnished to the Attorney General of the State of California. Burk Chung, Trustee. Fiscal year ending November 30, 2010. **#113249. December 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2010**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: CNC-10-547315. SUPERIOR COURT, 400 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION of Mok Yang Jung for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Mok Yang Jung** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: Mok Yang Jung Proposed Name: **Jacob Mok Yang Jung** . THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: Jan 18, 2011 Time: 9:00 AM room - 218. Signed by James J McBride, Presiding Judge on November 18, 2010. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on November 18, 2010 by D. Steppe, Deputy Clerk. **Publication dates: December 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2010. L#113246**

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: CNC-10-547353. SUPERIOR COURT, 400 McAllister St. San Francisco, CA 94102. PETITION of Jonathan Ross Jaochico for change of name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner **Jonathan Jaochico** filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Present Name: Jonathan Ross Jaochico Proposed Name: **Jonathan Ross Jaochico Arana**. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING Date: Feb 10, 2011 Time: 9:00 AM room - 218. Signed by James J McBride, Presiding Judge on December 8, 2010. Endorsed Filed San Francisco County Superior Court on December 8, 2010 by Param Natt, Deputy Clerk. **Publication dates: December 22, 29 2010, January 5 and 12, 2011. L#113255**

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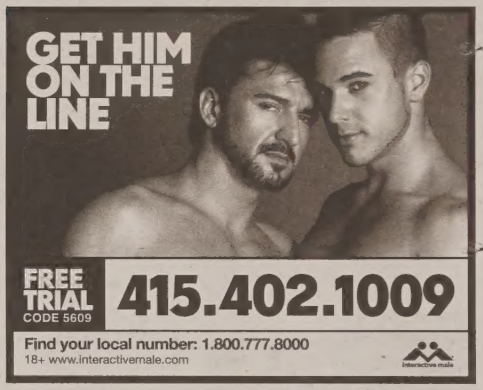

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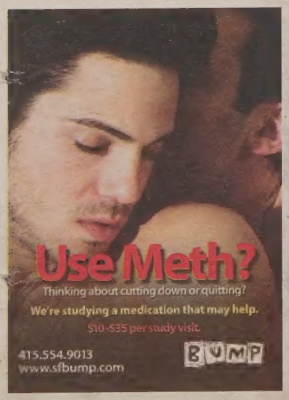

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